REFLECTIONS

CRITICAL AND MORAL

ON THE

LETTERS

OF THE LATE

EARL OF CHESTERFIELD.

By THOMAS HUNTER, M.A.
VICAR OF WEAVERHAM IN CHESHIRE.

GREAT MEN ARE NOT ALWAYS WISE: NEITHER DO THE AGED UNDERSTAND JUDGMENT.

JOB XXXII. 9.

Si la nobleſſe eſt vertu, elle ſe perd par tout ce qui n'eſt pas verteux; et ſi elle n'eſt pas vertu c'eſt peu de choſe.

M. DE LA BRUYERE.

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MDCCLXXVI.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

TO THE

RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD

WILLIAM,

Lord Biſhop of CHESTER,

DEAN OF CHRIST CHURCH,

AND PRECEPTOR TO THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES

GEORGE PRINCE OF WALES,

AND

FREDERICK BISHOP OF OSNABRUG.

MY LORD,

ONE who cenſures ſo popular and celebrated a writer as the Lord CHESTERFIELD, hath need of all honeſt advanta-

ges, to avoid the prejudices, to beſpeak the attention, and engage the favour and candour of the public. The author of theſe ſheets pretends to no advantages but ſuch as a regard to truth, to virtue and the happineſs of mankind may give him. He, therefore, calls on your Lordſhip as his patron and protector, to give him countenance, and to introduce him with credit into the world upon this occaſion.

ſion. Your Lordſhip's name is great: and, the high offices, to which, without the arts of faction or the efforts of ambition, you have been called, — of a Chriſtian Prelate and a Preceptor to Princes, may be thought to have ſome weight in the balance againſt titled greatneſs and patrician ſplendor.

But, abſtracting from all titular diſtinction and external

external grandeur, which conſtitute no part of the great or moral man; ſhould we contraſt with the ſplendid portrait of perfection which Lord Cheſterfield affects to give us in his own conduct, and in the leſſons which he preſcribes to his ſon, a character of a different form and feature, it would for ever diſcredit the cauſe of falſe politeneſs, and the princi-

ples

ples and practiſes of its inſidious advocate.

THE great and good man depends on truth and nature, not on artifice and fallacy, for his ſucceſs. He is ſingle in his views, his words and actions. He is what he ſeems: he ſpeaks what he thinks: he intends what he profeſſes: he is faithful to his word, as to his oath. He ſcorns alike ſimulation and diſſimulation,

on, under whatever ſpecious ſophiſtry diſtinguiſhed or recommended. He is eminent for native ſtrong ſenſe, improved and adorned, not only by a juſt taſte for polite letters, and elegant compoſition, but, by uſeful and extenſive ſcience. He liſtens more to the dictates of reaſon, than to the arts of refinement, and dwells more on the general rule than on the exception. He is equally unaffected in

in his manners and ſtyle. He is ſerious, manly, firm and elevated; ſteady and inflexible in the proſecution of truth and juſtice; and, amidſt the various and fluctuating notions of nominal and latitudinarian Chriſtians, an undiſſembled aſſertor of the faith once delivered to the Saints.

WHEN we obſerve prudence renouncing craft,

wiſdom not debaſed by intrigue, ſagacity and ſucceſs not diſgraced by artifice and hypocriſy: When eminence appears without magnificence, elevation without pride, ſuperiority without vanity, and ſignificance and importance of character without the parade of outward eclat, and the badges of office and honour: When the man, the citizen, the Briton appears diſtinguiſhed by fidelity

delity to his friends, by compaſſion to the miſerable, by relief to the oppreſſed, by favour to the good, by protection to the learned, by love to his country, and loyalty to his prince, upon principles of conſcience and conviction: When an undiſſembled zeal for GOD and his truth, as the foundations on which the pillars of the moral and civil world are ſupported, form the

ruling paſſion of the heart, and give law to the general conduct: When we view ſuch a character, we look down with contempt on thoſe ſuperficial graces, to the ſtudy and attainment of which Lord Cheſterfield would be thought to confine all the buſineſs of education, and all the perfection of human nature.

BUT, my Lord, I dare not proceed. Your Lordſhip

ſhip does not ſeek, as you do not want the applauſe of man. Beſides, we have found, by experience, that a great and illuſtrious character has, ſometimes, ſuffered by the diſplay, and been regarded, if not reſented as a libel upon the bulk of mankind: like a body eminently luminous, which affords not pleaſure, but offence and pain to a weak and diſtempered eye. I will not, therefore, by

attempting a full and more perfect portrait of your Lordſhip, hurt the pride, mortify the ignorance, and provoke the envy and malignity of the vulgar-ſpirited reader; and ſhall content myſelf with wiſhing, that ſuch characters as your Lordſhip's may never be wanting to confront the vain wit, the falſe philoſopher, the diſſembling politician, the ignoble

noble patrician, and the profligate man of pleaſure.

THE beſt title which theſe Reflections have to your Lordſhip's patronage is, that they are meant to co-operate with your Lordſhip's example, which holds out to us ſo different a ſtyle and order of perfection to that adopted and recommended by the noble Lord; as the exemplary lives of Chriſtians, in general, and

of the Chriſtian Clergy, in particular, will always be the beſt recommendation of their religion, and the moſt effectual confutation of thoſe who deny its influence and authority by their practice or opinions.

I am,

MY LORD,

Your Lordſhip's
moſt dutiful
and devoted Servant,

THOMAS HUNTER.

PREFACE.

WE are ſometimes overtaken by dead calms, and, ſometimes aſſaulted by ruder tempeſts in the voyage of life, which damp the vigour and activity of the ſoul, and render us alike incapable of diſcharging the ordinary offices, and of ſharing in the innocent pleaſures of our being. In either caſe, our care, next to that of devoting and, reſigning ourſelves to the great

great pilot of nature, will be to amuſe, as well as we can, and to fill up the vacant hours with what may be agreeable to ourſelves, though not profitable to others. But, if we can render our amuſements of any advantage to the world, we have the comfort of reflecting, that we are not uſeleſs members of ſociety; that we do not live in vain, and, that an incapacity for greater atchievements may have its uſe in the plan of Providence, by ſuggeſting a ſtricter attention to the humbler offices of life.

We may not be qualified to conduct

conduct armies, to fight battles, to extend empire abroad, or to defend and ſecure its liberties at home; we may not preſume to inform princes, or to teach ſenators wiſdom. But if we have, ſtill, any ability left to inſtruct the ignorant, to direct the wanderer, to reclaim the flagitious, to ſupport the weak, to confirm the virtuous, to remove prejudices, to vindicate, or in any degree to promote the virtue and happineſs of mankind;---we acknowledge, we adore the hand of Heaven in our ſituation.

LORD CHESTERFIELD'S Letters were

were firſt taken up as an amuſement to deceive the paſſing moments. They were, indeed, amuſing, but ſoon appeared alarming. The reader found his faith, his virtue, his underſtanding inſulted; and the ſentiments of the juſt and good in all ages and nations of the world who were favoured with almoſt any degree of light, of truth and ſcience oppoſed and contradicted, by our well-bred and courtly philoſopher. The mere reader was thus led to commence author; and, very freely to expreſs his indignation and contempt of a writer, who, great and ſhining as his abilities were,

were, hath diſgraced, by applying them, to poiſon the morals, to baniſh the ſublimeſt virtue, to extinguiſh the moſt ſalutary truths, and to exterminate the moſt important intereſts and the ſincereſt happineſs of mankind.

If the author of theſe ſheets has made his amuſements, any way, contribute to the benefit of others, by expoſing this ſeductive and dangerous writer; he will be abundantly ſatisfied with the conſciouſneſs of having diſcharged his duty; regardleſs of the reproach he may incur, for preſuming to cenſure ſo popular, ſo polite,

polite, ſo diſtinguiſhed a noble-man.

THE ſubject of enquiry is truth and virtue. Here, therefore, we affect no complaiſance or ſervility; our reflections are the dictates of the heart. Lord Cheſterfield is regarded and addreſſed not as a nobleman, but as a man, a moraliſt and a citizen; and God alone is appealed to, as the judge of all.

ERRATA.

Page 68,	line 11,	for *ſubtility*	read *ſubtilty.*
115,	14,	for *aggravations*	read *aggravation.*
163,	10,	for *immoral*	read *immortal.*
202,	3,	for *it*	read *its.*
209,	6,	for *fortune*	read *torture.*
241,	10,	for *kindler*	read *kindlier.*

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SECT. I.

TO cenſure is a diſagreeable part to the candid writer, and reader: To cenſure, where great and conſpicuous merit is allowed, wears the appearance of ſtill more

malignity: but, to cenſure a Writer ſo generally celebrated and admired as the Lord Cheſterfield, muſt prove ſtill more offenſive and perhaps more dangerous to the reputation of the critic, than of the author whom he affects to condemn.

But there is a ſtrength and beauty in truth and virtue, a power and authority in religion which carry us beyond ourſelves, and diſpoſe us to a contempt of danger and difficulty, in their ſupport and defence: Thoſe principles were of little value, which are not worth defending at the hazard of our being. Dear as reputation, and awful as the reproach of the world may be to an author, an honeſt man will prefer the diſcharge of his duty, and the approbation of his conſcience and

and his GOD, to the united applauſe of the univerſe.

YET a regard to truth will preclude unjuſt prejudice, as well as general reprobation; and to deny a writer the praiſe to which he has a claim, on account of the cenſure to which he is liable, were no leſs impolitic than unjuſt. Let us, therefore, do juſtice to Lord Cheſterfield as a Writer, before we proceed to condemn him as an Author.

To do juſtice to Lord Cheſterfield's compoſition would require a pen like his own: Or let his Lordſhip's favourites, Venus and the Graces join in concert to ſing his eulogium!

WE ſhould not do him ſufficient

juſtice, ſhould we only ſay that he is clear and eaſy, natural and unaffected: for he is figurative, florid, ornamented and highly poliſhed. He does not hurt the ear, encumber the ſenſe, or perplex our thoughts with long and tedious ſentences; but is, every where, pure; ſhort, but expreſſive; conciſe, but not abrupt; full and ſatisfactory, but not voluminous; and has generally united laconic brevity with attic elegance. He is happy in expreſſions always ſuited to his ſubject; and nothing is farther from affectation than his language. I preſume, he was accuſtomed to ſpeak with the ſame eaſe and propriety that he writes. It ſeems natural to him: or, art had aſſumed ſo juſt a caſt, and ſo well imitated the tone of nature, that we cannot diſtinguiſh the one from the other.

LORD

LORD Cheſterfield's ſtyle is muſic, filling and delighting the ear with the moſt melting notes, and the ſweeteſt and moſt happy cadences: or, his hand may be ſaid to be that of one of the firſt maſters in painting, who preſents you with the gayeſt ſcenery, the loveliеſt landſcapes, and the moſt ſplendid colouring in nature. A brook, however pure and tranſparent, is too diminutive an object to give us a juſt reſemblance of the Lord Cheſterfield's ſtyle and manner. We may compare his Lordſhip's compoſition to a ſtream (were not this, likewiſe, too trite an image) full, but not redundant; loud, but not noiſy; ſmooth and placid, yet not languid or ſluggiſh; ſtrong, but not harſh, diſſonant or raging; harmonious in its courſe, muſical in its falls; and, in

the whole, feaſting the eye, the ear, the fancy, the ſenſitive taſte, and all the animal faculties and paſſions of the man. Its banks are crowned with all the beauties of ſimple nature; or with ornaments formed after the models, or anſwering to our ideas, of perfect nature. We have only to lament, that the ſource from whence it flows is tainted, and conveys a ſubtle poiſon, fatal to the lives of thoſe who indulge, at large, in the tempting ſtream.

In his moral leſſons, he gives us not only the trite apothegm, or thread-bare maxim; but he illuſtrates his obſervations by happy alluſions, enlivens them by wit, enforces them by reaſon, and recommends them by proper examples; ſo that you are not only

only inſtructed, but pleaſed, not, merely, informed, but charmed with his manner, his language and addreſs: with much ſimplicity he has much purity; and, is, at the ſame time, both eaſy and elegant.

He ſeems to be always calm, recollected and in good humour; happy in an uniform tranquillity, the effect of natural temper and gaiety of heart; and theſe cheriſhed and improved by cultivation, by polite letters, and by that eaſe and ſerenity, that indolence, that independence which every friend of the Muſes ought, or would be thought, to be poſſeſſed of. His fortune, his titles and honours might be aſſigned as contributing to this happy ſpirit, did we not obſerve men poſſeſſed of all theſe, not diſtinguiſhed

by their humanity, their placability, or good temper.

He is not ſo laboured and affectedly learned as Lord Bolingbroke; but, then, he is more clear, more eaſy and agreeable; and inſults not his readers with ſuch a profuſion of erudition, and ſuch an exhibition of ſuperior reaſoning, upon every ſubject that occurs, as tend to ſpeak him ſupreme dictator, in letters as in politics, in theology as in philoſophy, and, next to the infinite Creator, the firſt genius in the univerſe. Lord Cheſterfield is, in his writings, what, we preſume, he was, in his life; — humane, chearful, complaiſant and obliging; entertaining without form, and inſtructive without pride or inſolence; deſirous, at the ſame time, to pleaſe and to inform;

inform; and aiming to adviſe as a friend, rather than to dictate as a maſter.

He has a quick and clear conception on the ſubjects that lie within his ſphere, — a fine imagination, an accurate and juſt taſte for compoſition and works of genius, with a peculiar beauty of expreſſion; the alluſions he, oftentimes, makes uſe of have not, only, a perfect propriety, but a ſingular delicacy and poetical juſtneſs, in their application. He has not, indeed, given us much that is new, on the ſubject of criticiſm; but his own compoſition and letters exhibit the juſteſt ſpecimen of that correctneſs, perſpicuity and elegance, which he recommended to the practice of his ſon: and, a thouſand critical precepts would

would not contribute, ſo much, to form a perfect ſtyle, as his own example.

His wit is prompt and natural, yet keen and manly: and volumes could ſcarce contain a ſtronger ſatyr againſt pedants and antiquarians, than what is couched in one ſhort ſentence, amongſt the directions for his ſon's ſtudies: "Let blockheads read what blockheads write."

It is much to the honour of Lord Cheſterfield, that, amidſt diſſipation and pleaſure, the offices and honours which he ſupported, as a Senator and a Stateſman, favoured by fortune and flattered by the popular voice, he ſtill preſerved a good general reputation, leiſure for ſtudy and taſte for polite letters.

letters. He appears to have had a real love of knowledge, and to have made ſuch a proficiency in literature, both ancient and modern, as do diſtinguiſhed credit to his title and character in life; and the cloiſtered ſage, with all the opportunities and advantages of ſtudious retreat, may bluſh at his own indolence and ignorance, when compared with the activity exerciſed, and the range taken, by this enterprizing genius.

His acquaintance with books was, indeed, uncommon for a man of quality; as his taſte and judgment were more juſt and ſolid than might be expected from a man of faſhion; who, in forming the character and directing the conduct of his ſon, recommends to

to him, and prefers, ſhew to ſubſtance, and ſplendour to weight.

As a critic, his lordſhip, in conformity to the beſt modern authors, both French and Engliſh, adopts ſimplicity and truth, before affectation, conceit, refinement and brilliancy: and though, we ſay, he has given us nothing new or original, on this ſubject, yet we cannot but regard the Lord Cheſterfield's verdict as valuable, and his comment as judicious in favour of truth, ſimplicity and the genuine beauties of nature.

He has not only a juſt but a refined taſte, in the polite arts and polite letters. He joins the general approbation and applauſe given to the great maſters

maſters of antiquity; (except in the caſe of Homer; the natural, the genuine, and rude manners of whoſe heroes hurt the delicacy of our modern man of faſhion). He does juſtice to their general characters, and ſometimes, aptly, points out their particular beauties. He, acutely, expoſes the affected pedant, the ſcholar without taſte, and the virtuoſo without ſentiment. He was a more equal judge of the antients, than of the moderns: in his report and character of theſe laſt, he was prejudiced by friendſhip, by paſſion, by his morals, and by the political maxims which concur with and favour his own.

His imagination was lively, and his memory ſtrong. The traces which his favourite objects, a fine ſentiment in

in an author, or a quick ſenſation of pleaſure had made upon him, ſeem to have retained their colour, flavour and impreſſion upon his fancy, to extreme old age: and, he is happy, enough, in recollecting and applying the ideas he had ſtored up, in the courſe of his former polite converſation and reading. Amidſt diſſipation, pleaſure and buſineſs, he poſſeſſed a very clear and cool head; and may ſeem to have ſtudied his ſubjects on good manners and the world, as he has treated them, with all the preciſion, attention and accuracy of a profeſſor.

YET diſpaſſionate as he ſeems, he was no reaſoner. Wit, which was his talent, is ſtruck, and expects others ſhould be ſo, with the preſent thought, without regarding conſiſtency, or purſuing

ſuing conſequences. He has himſelf practiſed the maxims which he has given his ſon, and aims more to gain the paſſions than to convince the underſtanding of his readers.

EASY in his fortune, content with his reputation, ſatisfied with his rank and ſtation, and finding, or imagining, himſelf at liberty to indulge to pleaſure, to gay amuſements and polite ſtudies, it does not appear that he had been in any ſignal diſtreſs, or acquainted with any weight of ſorrow, or calamity in life. Thus diſcharged from the diſcipline of the ſeverer virtues, he had the greater range for imagination and pleaſure, and was converſant and familiar with ideas the moſt gay and feſtive in nature. A ſtranger to the wants, the drudgery and

and buſineſs of life, he gave full play to his genius and conſtitution; to wit, to frolic, to delicacy, to the taſte and faſhion of the world; and miſtakes pleaſure for happineſs, pomp for greatneſs, ſplendour for glory, and popular eſtimation for real good fame. Thus diſpoſed, he devoted, he ſacrificed himſelf to the Graces, and to the attainment of ſuch qualities and accompliſhments as were beſt fitted to pleaſe, to attract, and raiſe the admiration of mankind, and to gratify his own vanity and ſelfiſhneſs. Hence, he who conſidered this world as his all, was lead to deal, as much as poſſible, in the pleaſurable, the brilliant, the ſhewy and pompous tracts of life; to ſtudy pleaſure as a ſcience; and to practiſe it as others do the ordinary occupations of life. His heart, his head,

head, the whole man was infected with this enchanting ſorcereſs. His ſtyle in writing naturally contracted a caſt and colour from his habit of thinking and acting: and from the man of pleaſure, of taſte and elegance, we expect, what we find, in Lord Cheſterfield, ideas, and a diction gay, refined and elegant. His lyre anſwered to the pulſe of his heart, and the enchantreſs pleaſure attunes the notes, and harmonizes the periods of his compoſition. With delight we liſten to the ſyren ſong, though we reject the ſubject and matter with ſcorn, contempt and indignation.

He took, and adviſed his friend to take the gentle, the favourable, the indulgent ſide of moſt queſtions, and conſequently avoided as much as poſſible all occaſion of diſquiet and diſguſt.

This world was his paradiſe; and he made the moſt of it. This deſpicable clod, this wilderneſs, barren and imperfect as it is, affords many a fertile ſpot, refreſhing ſtream, happy ſhade and delightful proſpect: he obſerved, he collected, he enjoyed them; and if, from thence, he contracted no moral, no manly, no rational, or religious joy and complacency; yet, he derived from them a natural, a ſenſitive and animal pleaſure; which ſupported and recruited his ſpirits, and enlarged and enlivened his imagination.

A COMPOSED and happy temper, a heart at eaſe, and an independent ſituation, are perhaps the moſt favourable circumſtances in an author's fortune. Traduced by the envious and malignant, hated by the rich, ſuſpect-

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ed by the proud, and overlooked by the great, forgotten or coldly reſpected by his friends, and only noticed by his enemies, he has neither genius to project, nor ſpirit to proſecute any bold or extenſive ſcheme of literature. Lord Cheſterfield was free from all incumbrances of this ſort, which might damp his ſpirit, or confine his genius. Raiſed by a patrician and hereditary patrimony above the wants of nature and the drudgery of office, ſporting in the lap of pleaſure, flattered, careſſed and celebrated as a wit of the firſt order, he was eaſily prompted to exert himſelf, and to diſplay thoſe admirable talents which God had given him. His title, his fortune, a conſciouſneſs of his parts and popular character, ſeem to have been to him in the place of a good conſcience; and he might

be thought, by his manner, to have enjoyed all the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs. A confidence in ourſelves naturally ariſes from the approbation and applauſe of others; and few men living had more of that applauſe and approbation than Lord Cheſterfield. In good humour with ourſelves, we are naturally impelled and properly qualified to ſpread good humour among others: and it would be injuſtice to his lordſhip to deny him the character of a pleaſing and agreeable writer. As his ſpirit was not cramped by a narrow fortune, ſo neither was his temper ſoured by diſappointment and diſtreſs. Hence his wit is lively, gay, and frolic, and degenerates not into that ſatyr, ſpleen and invective, which generally mark the writings of diſcarded and diſcontented courtiers; or,

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of thoſe who think themſelves neglected or injured, that is, denied ſomewhat, which their vanity ſuggeſts as due to their ſuperior abilities and rank in life. He writes, therefore, not only with more freedom and ſecurity, but with eaſe, pleaſure, and perfect epicurean tranquility, to himſelf and to his friends; eſpecially as the rule or principle which he preſcribed to others, and which he practiſed himſelf, was to pleaſe.

Besides theſe advantages, he had his more manly faculties, his more valuable endowments, and his more ſolid virtues; ſo far as they were not melted down by that pleaſure, that ſweetneſs, thoſe graces and that good humour, which we may preſume, affected his ſtyle, as well as his con-

duct: and we cannot help obſerving that there is more eaſe than elevation, more of ſmoothneſs and ſoftneſs than of ſtrength and vigour in his compoſitions.

To the wit and genius which nature had laviſhed on Lord Cheſterfield, he ſuperadded application, critical knowledge and a ſtudy of the beſt writers on compoſition and eloquence. Propriety and elegance of diction he had peculiarly cultivated, and moſt earneſtly recommends to his ſon, as the dreſs of thought, which had more power over the paſſions and affections of mankind, than plain truth, reaſon and argument.

A GENEROUS ambition had inſpired him with an early taſte and love of letters,

letters, and with a contempt and neglect of field ſports and the diverſions of the turf, the faſhionable amuſements of his order. The firſt or beſt writers of Greece and Rome, poets, hiſtorians and orators, muſt be allowed, if not the foundation, yet the beſt models and maſters of good ſenſe, juſt taſte and elegant compoſition; and to his claſſical enthuſiaſm among other cauſes, or to that academical pride and pedantry, which the courtier affects to deſpiſe and ridicule, we may juſtly aſcribe that diſtinguiſhed figure which Lord Cheſterfield made, and ſtill makes as a graceful writer and ſpeaker.

To all this we may add, that he had ſupported ſome of the higheſt offices in the ſtate, had converſed with courts and kings, and was familiar to

circles of grandeur, magnificence and ſplendour. Hence we ſhould not wonder that his ſtyle even upon ordinary occaſions, and throughout the whole of this epiſtolary correſpondence, is eaſy and unembarraſſed, yet correct and elegant, enriched with appoſite metaphors, and all the ſplendid and even gaudy ornaments of the polite ſcholar and accompliſhed courtier.

THUS nature and art, genius, birth and fortune conſpired to form him a pleaſing and perſuaſive orator; and a model of compoſition on prudential, on political, on familiar ſubjects. Upon the whole he is a maſterly writer and judicious critic; on many ſubjects an entertaining, an inſtructive and very valuable author; eſpecially where morality, the intereſts of ſincere

cere virtue, and the principles of true religion are not, immediately, concerned. But ſtill he muſt be conſidered as a writer too eaſy, too ſmooth, too delicate and elegant to be numbered among the maſters of eloquence; or to claim the title and applauſe of pathetic and ſublime: he is more a wit than an orator, and has in his manner more of the ſhepherd's reed, or lover's lute, than the trumpet of the battle and the ſhouting. He wants the power to rouze, to awe, to animate and alarm, and reſembles more the vernal breeze, or murmuring rill, than the tempeſt, the whirlwind, the lightening and thunder of heaven.

If it be ſaid, that his literary correſpondence did not afford a proper ſubject for eloquence and grandeur of com-

compoſition, we reply that the ſublime does not ſo much ariſe from, or conſiſt in the ſubject, as in the genius of him who has the molding of it; and that a ſoul devoted to delicacy, to politeneſs and pleaſure is alike incapable of heroic deeds, of generous principles, of elevation and ſentiment, and ſublimity of diction.

We obſerve the majeſty of Virgil frequently breaking forth in his eclogues, and we reſpect the prince of Roman poets, even in his ſhepherd's weeds. In his Georgics, it is obſerved by one * who was familiar with, and happily imitated his manner, "that we ſee in him a ruſtic majeſty, like that of a Roman dictator at

* Addiſon's Eſſay on the Georgics.

at the plough; that he delivers the meaneſt of his precepts with a kind of grandeur, and that he breaks the clods, and toſſes the dung about with an air of gracefulneſs." In other paſſages of his works, where he would ſeem moſt to depreſs himſelf, and to renounce all ambition, wealth and grandeur, he is, indeed, moſt admirable and elevated; as in the following paſſages.

Flumina.

Amem, ſylvaſque inglorius!
Aude hoſpes contemnere opes, & te quoque dignum
Finge Deo.

FROM the great we naturally expect even in their triflings and amuſements, in their ſonnets and letters, an air of elevation and ſuperior dignity, ſuited to their birth, their titles and ſtation. Hamlet is ſtill the prince of Denmark in

in his madneſs and extravagancies, even in his gallant *badinage* with Ophelia; and in his droll raillery with Polonius. Henry prince of Wales, amidſt blemiſhes and irregularities which ſtained the morning of his life, and connected, as he was with, that low and lewd buffoon Falſtaff, ſtill preſerved and gave frequent proofs of conſcious dignity and a princely ſpirit, and ſhone with a kind of clouded majeſty that beſpoke the brightneſs and glory of his future day.

As we have done ſufficient juſtice to Lord Cheſterfield's ſtyle and manner, (though we ſay that he has more of Paterculus than of Livy, more of Xenophon than of Plato) ſo we muſt not paſs over his matter, without allowing its due claim to approbation and

and applauſe, on various ſubjects. He had from experience and reflection, a deep and extenſive knowledge of human nature; particularly, of its follies, its weakneſſes and vices; though of its great dignity, its rational powers, its intellectual attainments, its moral perfection and divine capacities he had no experience, and appears to have had no conception. But, on other ſubjects, that lie more within his ſphere, he ſhews great knowledge, and makes not only pertinent and uſeful, but deep and refined obſervations.

In politics, ſo far as theſe were an art not connected with, nor founded in virtue, truth and conſcience, Lord Cheſterfield was a great proficient: for he had great maſters; not indeed, a Livy

Livy nor a Clarendon, but the Cardinals Richlieu, Mazarine, De Retz, with Machiavel and Tacitus. Theſe all made human nature, its follies, its frailties and falſhood, the chief ſubject or inſtrument of their operations; and admitted as lawful in the means, whatever was expedient to the ends they propoſed.

On other ſubjects, he is more moral, and therefore more inſtructive and convincing. He has ſhewn very good judgment in reſpect to the buſineſs and conduct of the world; and ſuppoſing This to be our all, his lordſhip's advice in the acquiſition and management of its profits and pleaſures is perfectly œconomical and judicious. His prudential maxims, reſpecting his pupil's future conduct in life, ſpeak a diſcern-

ment

ment perfectly acquainted with his ſubject, and an ardor and intenſeneſs that had no other ſubject or object in view. No child of this world was, perhaps, ever wiſer in his generation than Lord Cheſterfield; or preſcribed more proper or effectual methods for making the moſt, or acquiring the largeſt ſhare of it. Every child of the world, indeed, adopts the ſame conduct; but few, upon the compariſon, have the ſame natural ſagacity or acquired experience, to qualify them to preſcribe the trueſt meaſures of ſuch a conduct, or to cover the groſſneſs and immorality of the practice, in ſome inſtances, with ſuch plauſibility of reaſoning, ſuch a ſemblance of prudence and ſuch politeneſs of addreſs.

THE rules he gives reſpecting converſation

verſation are perfectly juſt and rational: no one can more ſtrongly paint, or more fully expoſe the folly, the impertinence, the ridiculous vanity of ordinary characters, in mixed company, than our well bred author. But theſe obſervations are ſuch as the common ſenſe of every one, who has been but moderately acquainted with the world, muſt dictate; and the noble lord, we may preſume, from his clearneſs and juſtneſs in the preceptive, was himſelf a model in the practical part, and though vanity, by his own confeſſion, had no little influence on his conduct, we may ſuppoſe that it did not make any part in his converſation. His obſervation on men and manners ſpeak great ſagacity; are juſt and clear, yet profound. They are only unhappily applied, when adduced

ced as reaſons to juſtify, to countenance or flatter the faſhions, the follies and vices of mankind. Some of his remarks, however, are ſo trite and obvious to common obſervation, that they betray a ſimplicity of paternal fondneſs, and ſome ſeeming defect of underſtanding in a ſon who could want ſuch admonitions. But we muſt remember that the father was, here, ſpeaking to the ſon, and not to the public,

His obſervations on books and reading, on the uſe and abuſe of time, on the end and advantage of travel, — on compoſition in general, and the epiſtolary in particular, are all perfectly juſt and truly valuable.

His advice to his ſon recommend-

ing truth, virtue, honour and the purity of his moral character, we ſhould have valued the more, had we not ſeen them afterwards explained away by court-caſuiſtry, by the documents of politeneſs, by political logic, by an indulgence to pleaſure and paſſion, to avarice and ambition, which the preceptor recommends elſewhere to his pupil: as the juſt contempt which the noble Lord pours upon the infidel tribe among us, had been of more weight, had he been leſs laviſh of his compliments to ſome of the moſt eminent infidel writers.

If there is a fault in Lord Cheſterfield's ſtyle, it is, that it is too much ſtyle. It has in it more of art than nature. Such an uniform conſtruction of verbage, the ſame rounded periods,

periods, the ſame harmonious cadences, ſuch a perpetual flow of wit and metaphor, with which his ſtyle is not only crouded, but, I had almoſt ſaid, ſurfeited, like too luſcious ſweets, cloy rather than refreſh us; and, we are diſguſted with a vanity appearing in ſo much ornament and brilliancy of diction. Perpetual ſmoothneſs grows inſipid: all ſoftneſs, without a proper mixture of harſher, of ſtronger and bolder notes, affords but a languid pleaſure; animates no noble paſſion of the ſoul, nor inſpires any heroic or elevated ſentiments.

THERE is a manly and ſpirited eloquence, equally removed from the cold correctneſs of the pedant, from the cant of a languiſhing *Inamorato*,

and the frippery of modiſh complaiſance, as from the rudeneſs of the boor and the barbariſm of a provincial dialect. This manly eloquence affects the heart more than the ear, the ſoul more than the ſenſe, captivates nature with a happy violence and a power only leſs than divine.

The ſimpleſt truth or object, juſtly copied from nature, ſtrikes you more than the moſt laboured or high coloured piece, in which you perceive the painter's intention was only to exhibit himſelf and to gratify his own vanity and oſtentation. Lord Cheſterfield generally preſerves the tone of the great man, at leaſt as much as could be expected in this familiar correſpondence; yet, ſometimes, he forgets himſelf, and falls below his proper

proper dignity: he is not only too laviſh of, but has too much levity in, his wit: and in the peruſal of theſe Letters we cannot always ſeclude the idea of the itinerant doctor, with that arch wag his buffoon, united in one perſon, acting, at the ſame time, the ſage and the droll, and diſpenſing by turns his jokes and his pacquets.

WERE we to compare this famous collection of Letters with thoſe of Tully or Pliny, we ſhould ſay, That if our noble author is leſs entertaining and inſtructive, more barren and more abounding in repetitions than the two Romans; it may be obſerved in his defence, that he was more confined in his ſubject, and in his epiſtolary correſpondence; nor does it appear

that he wrote to the world, and with a view to its applauſe or approbation.

CICERO's and Pliny's Letters were wrote in form; frequently, on public occaſions, and, to ſome of the moſt eminent characters in Rome, diſtinguiſhed for letters and philoſophy, for offices and honours. Lord Cheſterfield's Letters are the inſtant and unguarded effuſions of his heart, rather than the ſtudied compoſitions of his head; and, though thrown off at random, give us a more real portrait of the noble Lord, than perhaps the moſt laborious and accurate pencil could have done. He is more natural and eaſy, leſs ſpruce, leſs laboured and affected than Pliny, but more oſtentatious; and, as a wit, leſs ſerious, leſs important, leſs moral, leſs

leſs manly, leſs a Roman than Tully; whoſe Epiſtles are, we agree with Lord Cheſterfield, perhaps the beſt models of compoſition, in this kind, of any yet extant.

CICERO, in his Epiſtles, gives us a variety of incidents and characters; and exhibits ſtrong inſtances of his humanity and benevolence, by the advice, the ſupport, the comfort he adminiſters to ſome of his friends, and by the recommendation he wrote with, and the protection and favour he procured, for others. Theſe friendly offices ſeem to occupy the greateſt part of his literary correſpondence. But in the Letters before us we are tired and diſguſted with the ſame ſpirit of meanneſs and ſelfiſhneſs, which dictates every letter, I had al-

moſt ſaid every line of this correſpondence, between the father and his ſon, whom he inſtructs in the practice of humanity and benevolence, not as a duty, but an art or profeſſion which he was to live and thrive by; and who is taught to pleaſe and oblige mankind, not for their own ſakes, but to engage them to ſecond his own views, and to promote his intereſt or ambition.

NOTWITHSTANDING all the dignity which Lord Cheſterfield affects and preſcribes, there is a conſpicuous littleneſs in his general ſentiments and directions, confined as they are, in their ſubject, to the mere intereſt of the two correſponding parties; as if Lord Cheſterfield and his ſon were the only two perſons worthy note; or

or as if others were only conſiderable in proportion to their capacity of ſerving and obliging the father and the ſon. Mankind muſt be ſomewhat mortified in conſidering themſelves in the light, in which Lord Cheſterfield has conſidered them; as puppets and machines, which theſe two political jugglers are to manage and play off, as beſt ſuits their own intereſts and occaſions. He who exacts ſo much attention to others, may ſeem to have no faculties, but for this his other ſelf: and we are hurt by an anxiety, as intenſely and ardently conceived and expreſſed, for one beardleſs boy, as if the whole univerſe was concerned, or at ſtake, on the advancement or miſcarriage of his future figure and fortune.

If Cicero is accuſed of having deſerted his friends and the cauſe of the republic, it ſhould be remembered, that it was not before that cauſe was deſperate; and he has in his Letters frequently and warmly expreſſed his zeal for the commonwealth, and lamented the wretched ſtate of his country, "which had not one patriot left." But our noble author ſeems to conſider corruption as an indifferent, or innocent thing: he talks of treating with the burrough jobbers, for the purchaſe of a ſeat in the houſe, as a neceſſary and uſeful expedient for the benefit of his ſon; and appears to have conſidered his country in no other light, than as that of a conquered province, on whoſe ſpoils its governors were to feed and fatten.

Cicero

CICERO has not, if I remember right, uſed one licentious or indecent thought or expreſſion, except one; and this intended to expoſe the lewd creature to whom it was applied, and who was the ſcandal of Rome and of her ſex; but abounds with leſſons of truth, maxims of wiſdom, and juſt, moral, and political reflections: but the rankeſt Epicurean could not well be more a Senſualiſt, more diſſolute or more immoral than the Noble Lord in theſe epiſtolary Lectures to his Son.

IF Seneca is a beau, as Lord Bolingbroke, I think, has ſtyled him, he is of a different order to the Noble Lord under our conſideration. The philoſopher's foppery ariſes from a greatneſs and ſplendor of thought. If his unnatural rant is madneſs, it is virtue run

run mad. If the philoſopher is ambitious, his ambition appears in the many and excellent things which he has ſaid in favour not of vice but virtue; in deſcribing a perfection and ſublimity of truth and morality, which mere human nature was never capable of; and in recommending ſtoical abſurdity as a practical principle. This was certainly a much more venial fault than what our Noble Author is guilty of, in the exceſſive care and cultivation of external grace and outward accompliſhments, which he has preſcribed, and in the relaxations which he has indulged, to the appetites and paſſions of vitiated nature. For, ſurely, it is better to ſay fine things, that tend to purify and exalt, than ſuch as are fitted to debaſe and corrupt. In the eye of truth and reaſon, of GOD and his Angels,

Angels, one Seneca is of much more value than a hundred Chesterfields; and there is many a single letter in Seneca, that, in point of truth and virtue, out-weighs the whole mass of this prolix collection; whose real merit, in contributing to the sincere virtue and happiness of mankind, amounts not to the weight of a grain, or the value of a cypher.

But Roman or Heathen Moralists were not the authors suited to Lord Chesterfield's taste and passions. Though he had a great native stock of his own, yet he was more ambitious of borrowing from, and imitating the French, both in the delicacy of his manner, and in the refinement of his matter and sentiments. *La Bruyere, Rochefaucault, le Cardinal de Retz,* and *le Duc de*

de Sully, were amongſt his principal maſters in morals and politics. He has particularly and very juſtly recommended *la Bruyere*, but is leſs exact in his ſentiments of truth and nature, leſs original in his manner, leſs moral in his reflexions, leſs various, entertaining, and inſtructive in his characters, leſs pictureſque in his deſcriptions; and, if he has more wit and levity than the Frenchman, he falls ſhort of him in genuine humour and vivacity, in depth and penetration, and in his eſtimate of true virtue, perſonal merit, and real greatneſs.

THE Duke *de Rochefaucault*'s maxims are generally founded in the corruption of human nature, and deducible from that corruption. This is, in many inſtances, but not univerſally

verſally, true; for, this would not only diſcredit, but deſtroy all the nobleſt efforts, both of the divine and humane virtues. Yet the Lord Cheſterfield has carried it ſtill farther than this, and he would make vanity, ſelf-love, and the other immoral paſſions, not only the real effects of the corruption of human nature, but the legitimate principles of human conduct. He profeſſes, that he himſelf acted upon, and adviſes his ſon to act upon thoſe principles. What may be conſidered, in the Duke de Rochefaucault, as a mere *Jeux d'eſprit*,—the effort and pride of genius, is embraced by our author as ſober and philoſophical truth:—or, if Rochefaucault is, perhaps, as licentious in his principles, he is more chaſte and leſs offenſive in his expreſſion, and offers

leſs

leſs outrage to decency and the common ſenſe of mankind.

THE Duke *de Rochefaucault* thinks juſtly and expreſſes himſelf happily on many occaſions. Without the vanity of wit, or the oſtentation of ſcience and reading, he every where preſerves the air of a ſober enquirer and of the man of quality. He regarded himſelf as addreſſing the public: whilſt Lord Cheſterfield gave full range to his licentious ſpirit, ſecure, as he thought himſelf, from the notice and cenſure of the world.

NOTWITHSTANDING his great abilities and affectation to diſplay his wit, Lord Cheſterfield has many common place reflections, which had made a very indifferent figure in a writer of leſs name

name and note. You read many a page, I had almoſt ſaid a volume together, particularly the laſt or fourth, with very little improvement or information; except of ſome private anecdotes and the news of the day, obvious to every obſerver as well as his Lordſhip, who confeſſes that he was not in the ſecret. As a man of taſte, he diſapproves trite ſayings and vulgar obſervations; and warns his pupil to avoid them in converſation. They are as tedious, his Lordſhip might have have known, in books, as in diſcourſe. Yet, many of his maxims and moral documents are ſuch as have been hackneyed and handed down, from father to ſon, for two thouſand years paſt. His own frequent repetition of them tires us: but we grow ſick of them, when we ſee them haſhed over again,

and ſerved up anew, by a Reverend Doctor, whether for his own advantage, or for the benefit of the public, he knows beſt. The *Duc de Rochefaucault* has, indeed, the ſame ſentiment running through all his books, but then it is expreſſed in ſuch various language, and illuſtrated by ſo many various inſtances and examples, that we are rather entertained than diſguſted with the noble author. His ſubject is, indeed, the moſt obvious and common, viz. the human conduct: but, the motives from which he derives that conduct, or, on which he founds it, have generally an air of novelty; and thus pleaſe, at leaſt, if they do not inform and inſtruct the reader. *Rochefaucault*'s maxims may be allowed, as many of them are, certainly true; yet be applied, contrary to, or beyond the views

views and ſeeming intention of the author, to the ſupport of true religion. For, while they expoſe the feebleneſs and imperfection, they mortify the pride of human virtue; they ſhew us the propriety of humility, with the neceſſity of the divine aſſiſtance to regulate our manners, and to form a juſt moral conduct; and whilſt they ſtrip us of a falſe ſpendor, that makes us vain, they teach us both the reality and greatneſs of a virtue, that is both humble and ſincere. But Lord Cheſterfield's ſentiments and maxims, on moral ſubjects, are often directly ſubverſive of the principles of both natural and revealed religion.

An enthuſiaſt would take *Rochefaucault* for a ſerious aſſertor, and an able defender of that extravagant puritanical

paradox, which ſtamps ſin, damnation, and death upon the whole moral and rational creation of GOD; whilſt Lord Cheſterfield might ſeem to regard thoſe maxims as founded in truth and the conſtitution of nature, and therefore a ſufficient excuſe for all the vice, folly, and immorality that abounds in the world; and poor human nature muſt, it ſeems, be an apology for all the weakneſſes and obliquities we are guilty of. Thus, though he who invades another's property is, according to his Lordſhip, juſtly hanged for it, yet he who invades or violates a property, which the owner may be ſuppoſed to hold moſt dear,—the virtue of his wife or daughter, may charge the fault on fortune or the ſtars. Such is the latitude in morality which the modern polite philoſopher permits and indulges.

indulges. And, what could be the cauſe of this degenerate way of thinking in the two noble authors here compared, but a conſciouſneſs of their own frailties and vices, which they were willing to charge upon nature and neceſſity, and not to admit as their own act and deed?

But, perhaps, we have digreſſed too far in bringing into view the general character of Lord Cheſterfield, when the profeſſed deſign of this ſection was to exhibit the fairer ſide of it. But, ſo obnoxious is his moral character, that it is difficult to view him in any light without ſome degree of cenſure or prejudice.

SECT. II.

WE ſhall therefore be excuſed, if we indulge ourſelves a moment longer in reviewing the amiable part of Lord Cheſterfield's character, as it ſtrikes us at firſt ſight, and before we come to a nearer inſpection and examination of his genuine form and features.

THE true character of the noble Lord is given us, by himſelf, in colours too ſtriking to be miſtaken. He was eaſy and pleaſing in his diction, elegant in his manners, polite in his addreſs, endowed by art and nature with knowledge to inſtruct,

with elocution to perſuade, to charm, and captivate mankind. He had read books; — he had read men; — he was well acquainted with the workings of human nature, its various paſſions and propenſities. Good breeding, and the art of pleaſing, ſeem to have been the principal object of his ſtudy; and theſe were made ſubſervient to a darling ambition of ſharing in the advantages, and ſhining in the dignity and ſplendor of high life, of popular admiration, and courtly magnificence. Educated in eaſe and elegance, in polite letters and polite company, diſtinguiſhed by title and fortune, by wit and genius, we obſerve his head impreſſed with ideas, and his ſentiments tinctured with a colouring derived from theſe various circumſtances, and accidents of his life

life and fortune. All is eaſy and natural, except his wit, which appears, in the application, ſometimes affected and extravagant, and indulged at the expence both of truth, decency, and virtue: the luxuriancy of his imagination made him prodigal of it. Animated, as he was, with the ambition of his ſon's making a figure in courts, we naturally expect, and are not diſappointed in our expectations, that a comprehenſive or a competent knowledge of the hiſtory, the genius, the temper, the various conſtitutions, laws, intereſts and productions of the ſeveral ſtates of Europe ſhould be recommended to his attention and cultivation. His plan of ſtudy on this ſubject, though not regular or ſyſtematical, as communicated in ſcattered hints with the eaſe and familiarity of a friend,

a friend, is yet rational and judicious, and is only too minute in the parts, and too extenſive in the whole for the comprehenſion, or at leaſt the perfect attainment of his young pupil; whoſe capacity he ſeems to have meaſured by his own, or by his partiality or his ambition for him: yet the noble author ſaw, that all this comprehenſive knowledge would be of little uſe to the poſſeſſor, in public counſels or popular aſſemblies, without language to expreſs, and the art and ornament of elocution to adorn and recommend his ſentiments to his hearers. His reflections on taſte in general, and on eloquence in particular, are accurate and inſtructive; and the effects aſcribed to the laſt verified by pertinent and ſtriking inſtances. Lord Cheſterfield was himſelf, we may fairly

fairly preſume, a great maſter in the art of ſpeaking which he here recommends.

BESIDES the foreign, the ſpeculative and important knowledge proper and neceſſary for the forming of our young ſtateſman, the noble author recommends, as ſtill more neceſſary, the knowledge of human nature, and the learning and art practiſed in a court. The art of pleaſing, of which he was a perfect maſter, he preſcribes to his pupil as the moſt direct and uſeful ladder, by which he is to aſcend to the honours and favours of a court, and to the diſtinction and eminence of a courtier. Other virtues may command reſpect and eſteem; yet to pleaſe is the only way to command affection and love: — but to pleaſe,

you

you muſt firſt know, you muſt firſt ſtudy mankind; a ſtudy in which the noble author ſeems to have been a great proficient, as might reaſonably be expected from his conſtant application to it: yet, as was moſt ſuitable to his ambition, the higheſt orders of mankind were the peculiar and diſtinguiſhed objects of his addreſs and adulation. The manners, the honours, the ſplendor of courtly life had charms irreſiſtible in his eye; here he moved moſt gracefully, as in his proper ſphere; in an element in which he might ſeem to have been born and bred, and to have paſt all his days *. Here he preſides as the genius of the place, and holds out a court-garment compoſed of all the

* Vol. III. p. 266.

inſinuation,

inſinuation, the art, the addreſs, the verſatility, the reſpect, the condeſcenſion, the complacency, the ſweetneſs, the ineffable graces, the elegancies and proprieties of poliſh and ſplendor neceſſary to be put on, and worn by all ſuch who aſpire to be favourites and miniſters. As he affected to ſhine in all, and moſt in the beſt companies, it was here he found the beſt, that is, the moſt faſhionable people, and moſt ſuited to his taſte and ambition *.

His paſſions, his wit and imagination being unreſtrained, unbroken and undiſciplined, were naturally led to full range, and to adopt objects the moſt pleaſurable, the moſt pompous,

* See p. 274—282.

the

the greateſt and moſt magnificent in life: thus we ſee not only his paſſions, but his very taſte and judgment affected by the ply or bias which he had received from nature or education. Hence we account for the preference which he gives to French manners, both in life and on the ſtage, — to their delicacy, their ſoftneſs, their verſatility and complacency, before the rudeneſs and ſavageneſs of *Britiſh Bumkins*, or in other words, country ſquires, and before the bloody dramatic writers of his own country. He requires delicacy more than ſtrength; pleaſure rather than inſtruction; and the graces before all the other divinities in heaven or earth. Hence we account for the peculiar diſtinction of approbation and applauſe which he has given to the palace of

Alcina

Alcina in *Arioſto*; and for his partiality to the eclat of *Voltaire*, and his Hiſtory of *Lewis* the Fourteenth.

VIEW then Lord Cheſterfield in the faireſt point of light, and you admire him as the fine gentleman, eaſy, elegant and polite, profuſe of his complacency, blandiſhments, the moſt winning addreſs and courteous condeſcenſion; a fine figure in his perſon, expenſive and faſhionable in his dreſs; — ſplendid at his table, but not luxurious; voluptuous, yet not debauched; a libertine with decency; and in the midſt of vagrant amours and illicit indulgences, ſtill affecting the man of honour and truth; — refined, yet generally juſt in his taſte, proper and elegant in his diction; powerful and perſuaſive in his elocution;

tion; — largely converſant with, and a very good judge both of books and men; a great maſter in the extenſive ſcience of politics, yet ſtill more diſtinguiſhed as a courtier than a ſtateſman; — ſingularly eminent for his addreſs, his movements, his graces, the *douceurs*, the ſoftneſſes, the placid features, the various airs, that habit of pleaſing, that perfection of good breeding, which are natural to the ſoil, and form both the eſſence and exterior of a court.

Or in other words; theſe Letters, at the firſt glance, exhibit Lord Cheſterfield, and preſent him to the public as a kind maſter, an anxious and affectionate parent, an engaging companion, an obliging friend, a polite ſcholar, a fine gentleman, a lively wit, an

an accompliſhed courtier, a penetrating ſtateſman, a compleat man of the world, furniſhed with all the qualities, and adorned with all the graces that might promote his intereſt, or favour his ambition, that might render him eaſy in himſelf, and agreeable, reſpectable, or neceſſary to others; the man of ſenſe, the man of virtue, and the man of honour; with genius, without ſingularity or affectation; with learning, without pedantry; with place and title, without pomp and pride; equally qualified for buſineſs, or for pleaſure; for the cabinet, or the drawing-room; for a ſenate, or a private ſtation; for a lady's levee, or a congreſs of princes. Such is the portrait of the noble Lord, as we may collect it thrown off in ſcattered touches and random ſtrokes

of his maſterly pencil. Innumerable graces enter into the compoſition of this Eſſay towards perfection; and we have only to lament, that we find them, upon a nearer inſpection, ſo miſerably ſhaded and diſgraced by the fouleſt ſtains, and the moſt impure mixtures.

SECT.

SECT. III.

IN the two laſt ſections, we gave, what we call, the bright ſide of Lord Cheſterfield's character: but we muſt not reſt here, if we would ſee his Lordſhip's real portrait, and drawn at full length. Nor can the Peerage plead privilege at the bar of criticiſm. Not only truth, but the whole truth is exacted from us, when we would inform and inſtruct mankind. This is the more neceſſary on the preſent occaſion; as the character and example of Lord Cheſterfield, celebrated as he was for wit and virtue, might, otherwiſe, do miſchief, by propagating vice and vanity, folly and falſehood, among

mankind. Beſides, there is an eaſe, an elegance, and charm in his Lordſhip's ſtyle and manner, which may eaſily inſinuate itſelf, and impoſe upon the common reader; as his plauſibility impoſed even upon the wiſe and good, in his life-time. Court-logic is, perhaps, as fallacious as the ſchool-logic; and we are in much leſs danger of being miſled in our conduct and manners, by the ſubtility of a ruſty doctor, than by the refinement of a polite and well-bred man of diſtinction and family.

WHAT moſt offends us in theſe letters is, the immorality with which they are replete. As a moraliſt, indeed, he affects to recommend virtue and good faith; but he is quite out of his element on this ſubject, and ſeems

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to have known no more of the eſſence, the power, the peaceful, and happy effects of virtue, than of what is doing in the moon, or any of the remoter planets: and the whole perfection he requires of his ſon, is the very reverſe, not only of chriſtian duty, but of true philoſophy.

He conſiders moral virtue and honour, as paſſable qualities, and of ſome name and reputation in the world; and as ſuch he recommends them to his ſon; but of the eſſential purity, the immutable nature, and eternal obligations of virtue, he had no conception; or if he had, he preſcribes practices, which he allows not ſtrictly juſtifiable; and avowedly indulges a violation of laws, both divine and human, in favour of your paſſions, where you may

eſcape the cenſure, by not contradicting the faſhion and opinion of the world.

VIRTUE and religion have in them a ſublime, a perfection, and divinity, which hold no friendly commerce with the common manners of the world. The man of the world is too much, and too eagerly engaged in the buſineſs and pleaſures of life, to lend a proper attention to abſtract and ſpiritual ſubjects; or to reliſh the inveſtigation of moral, intellectual, and religious truth.

LORD Cheſterfield's ſyſtem of ethics is void of all ſincere love to GOD or man, and may be properly ſtyled a ſyſtem of ſelf-love. His Lordſhip is a remarkable proof of the truth of an obſervation, which he has more than once

once repeated, That the underſtanding is the dupe of the paſſions. With an uncommon ſhare of underſtanding, enlarged and improved by reading and reflection, with all his wit, his ſtudies, and ſuperior ſagacity, he has ſacrificed the moſt uncontroverted principles and nobleſt efforts of virtue, love of your country, ſincerity to your friends, (which he ſcarce allows to have any exiſtence) a contempt of pleaſure, and vain glory, to a gratification of the ſelfiſh paſſions, to what ambition aſpires after, and to what the lower and animal appetites prompt. And the vices from which he would avert his pupil, are not repreſented in their native deformity, as violations of the laws of GOD, and of the ſanctions of men; as contrary to the opinions and practice of the beſt and

wiſeſt, and as deſtructive of the principles of truth, and of the intereſts of ſociety; but, they are to be avoided from the conſideration of their indelicacy, and the inconvenience and damage they bring to health, to fortune, and to your reputation in the world; ſo far as your intereſt may depend on that reputation, whether the world thinks right or wrong. Thus a common proſtitute is forbidden, as what is dangerous and diſgraceful; and keeping is condemned as what both the Indies could not ſupport: but an intrigue with a *Whore of Quality*, married or unmarried, is a gallantry not forbidden; but propoſed and inculcated by the father to his ſon, as what, beſides other advantages, is not diſcreditable in the opinion of the world.

SOME

SOME men's notions of virtue, and of the perfection of human nature, have been ſo ſublime and refined, that their ſchemes being found impracticable, they have abandoned ſociety and the world, to enjoy their ideal virtue in the ſhade. But Lord Cheſterfield's notions of poor human nature are ſuch, and his virtue of ſo eaſy and pliant a temper, that its very eſſence may ſeem to conſiſt in its verſatility, and conformity to the manners of thoſe with whom you converſe. Alcibiades's character, abandoned as it was, is, I think, propoſed in this reſpect, as an example for his ſon's imitation; and a court, according to his Lordſhip, the grand ſcene of ſimulation and diſſimulation, is the proper ſoil for the growth, the diſplay and expanſion of virtue.

THE

THE noble Lord's courteſy and humanity, overflowing and benevolent as they ſeem, are all a profuſion of verbeage, or the art of ſaying the beſt things, and offering your beſt ſervices, meaning and intending nothing, but to deceive thoſe who are ſimple enough to believe you ſincere. For, to thoſe who are in the ſecret, and mutually practiſe this mechanical trade of compliment, without any meaning, it is the moſt ludicrous farce in nature. Fie on it, my Lord! A ſhame upon that policy, which makes no diſtinction between prudence and artifice; between benevolence and flattery; between complacency and compliment; between wiſdom and craft; between the modeſt reſerve of the man, and the profeſſed diſſimulation of the courtier; which excludes ſincerity and friend-

friendſhip, true philoſophy, true virtue and true religion! *

VANITY, or an appetite for fame, which Lord Cheſterfield has made the motive and foundation of morality, and acknowledges to have been the principal incentive to his good actions, is itſelf a vice; or a virtue, if a virtue, which muſt diſpoſe the practiſer of it to adopt every vice or folly in faſhion. A ſteady perſeverance in the practice of what is righteous, juſt and good,

* "UN homme qui ſait la cour, eſt maitre de ſon geſte, de ſes yeux et de ſon viſage, il eſt profound, imprenetrable; il diſſimule les mauvais offices, ſoûrit à ſes ennemis, contrairit ſon humeur, déguiſe ſes paſſions, dément ſon cœur, parle, agit contre ſes ſentimens: tout ce grand raffinement n'eſt qu'un vice, que l'on appelle fauſſeté."

M. DE LA BRUYERE, Tom. I. p. 224.

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in oppoſition to the faſhion and corruption of the world has, and we hope, will ever be conſidered in the eſtimation both of reaſon, and revelation, as one of the moſt ſignal inſtances, and higheſt exertions of true virtue: but Lord Cheſterfield, we preſume, was the firſt philoſopher, who coolly and ſoberly recommended the faſhion and corrupt opinions of the world, as the ſtandard by which, and in conformity to which, you are to form your moral conduct. We cannot eaſily account for a nobleman of ſuch admirable parts, advancing ſuch outragious paradoxes; only this may be alledged in his favour, that he never publiſhed, nor ſurely ever intended that they ſhould be publiſhed to the world: they are no more than his private ſentiments,

timents, extracted from his commerce with the world, and communicated in confidence to a particular friend, on whoſe paſſions they might eaſily operate without oppoſition from reaſon or ſcruple of conſcience.

You have in Lord Cheſterfield a perfect picture of a man of the world. He will make the moſt of you, and of that world: he will affect your friendſhip; he will narrowly watch, and inſidiouſly pry into your infirmities; he will fiſh out your ſecrets, he will flatter your foibles; he will connive at, rather than reprove your faults: by a new invented diſtinction between morals and manners he will recommend and reconcile every plauſible and enſnaring artifice in converſation and conduct,

conduct, to the art of pleaſing, to politeneſs, and political expediency *.

We ſhould not eaſily reconcile ſuch a practice to the clear and ſound underſtanding, and the candid and benevolent heart, which the Lord Cheſterfield ſeems to be poſſeſſed of, had we

" * Soyez ambitienx, dit le monde á ſes ſecta-
" teurs, uſez de fineſſe envers vos egaux, de diſſi-
" mulation envers le Grands, de rigeur envers vos
" inferieurs, ap renez á ſatisfaire vos paſſions d' une
" maniere dèlicate, inſtruiſez-vous de la morale
" politique, ſuivez ces guides qui vous conduiront
" au ſuccèſs de vos galanteries, qui vous ouvrent les
" chemins de la faveur. Sacrifiez tout á votre a-
" grandiſſement, point d' affectation dans votre pro-
" bitè, ſi elle eſt contraire a votre reputation, point
" de probitè rèelle, ſi elle eſt nuiſible aux deſſeins
" de votre fortune, ſuplantez cet ennemi, dètruiſez
" ce rival, ne ſongez qu' á vous èlever. Telles
" ſont les maximes de monde.

M. de la Bruyere, Tom. 2. p. 36.

not

not been told, and did we not obſerve it proved to us by daily examples, that the love of the world blinds the eyes of men, obſcures their moral diſcernment; and that avarice and ambition, licentiouſneſs and lewdneſs generally diſpoſe thoſe who are devoted to them, to evade or explain away the cleareſt laws, and to reſiſt the plaineſt dictates of conſcience, which contradict the indulgence of their favourite paſſions.

SECT.

SECT. IV.

AS Lord Chesterfield's monitions and observations are not arranged in any order, or distributed into regular Essays, but thrown off occasionally and at random, as the present thought or occasion suggested; so these Reflections are the sentiments which instantly and naturally presented themselves to the author, on an interrupted perusal of the noble Lord's epistolary correspondence. Nor is the reader to hope to meet in these remarks with the courtier, the flatterer, or the man of fashion; but the sentiments of a plain man, an Englishman, and a Christian, perhaps a little

little animated and warmed by the injuſtice done, and the inſult offered to morality, and the religion of his country, by the noble Lord. And as, we conceive, we have already done ample juſtice to his abilities as a Writer, we think we have a right to take the more liberty, and to expect more credit and regard to our cenſures of him, as a Man and a Moraliſt.

MORALITY and Religion are too ſacred things to be ſported away in wit; and the privileges, the comforts, the bleſſings of human nature too valuable to be ſacrificed to the vanity or humour of the firſt Peer or Prince in Chriſtendom. The reverence in which I hold divine truth and the bleſſed Author of my exiſtence, will be my excuſe, if I am not

profuſe in my compliments to one, who however dignified and diſtinguiſhed by rank and title, has ſhewn himſelf an offender againſt both. What ſtrikes us at firſt ſight in theſe Letters, is the little efficacy which wit, reaſon, genius, erudition and education have in promoting ſincere virtue, and eſtabliſhing a juſt moral character, without the power and influence of religion. His Lordſhip has, indeed, frequently recommended integrity, and the moral virtues; but then he recommends them principally, if not ſolely, for the credit they give you with mankind, and as means fitted to ſerve your preſent intereſt, and to gratify your favourite paſſions; ſo that he occaſionally indulges his pupil in the moſt immoral liberties, which are not diſgraceful in the eye

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of the faſhion. The virtue he recommends is not ſuch as you meet with in Plato, in Seneca, in Epictetus, or Antonine; ſuch a virtue as may inform, improve, and fortify the ſoul, may ſupport you under the calamities of life, puſh you on to heroic deeds, animate you in the cauſe of liberty and your country, or inflame your affections and beneficence to mankind; — but it is a ſelfiſh principle, a political *ſageſſe*, directed merely to ſerve your ends, and to ſecond your views, in the attainment of what Lord Cheſterfield had moſt at heart, as the beſt and only good — the emoluments of the preſent life.

Of eloquence he has ſaid many fine things: and too much, perhaps, cannot be ſaid in its favour, when it

is employed in ſupport of truth and virtue, in defence of the injured and oppreſſed, — to expoſe the pillager and betrayer of our country, and to aſſert and vindicate the common rights and liberties of mankind. But when this divine talent is recommended, as Lord Cheſterfield has recommended it, as a proper inſtrument to captivate the popular applauſe, to render yourſelf neceſſary to goverment, and thereby to force yourſelf into employment, diſtinction and eminence; we deſpiſe the venal writer or ſpeaker, who, with the faculties of an Angel, thus baſely proſtitutes himſelf to the higheſt bidder. Religion itſelf is recommended, as far as it is recommended, as giving you an additional ſecurity in the integrity of thoſe who

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are influenced by it, and with whom you have to deal.

He paſſed for a patriot, yet the whole ambition of his ſoul ſeems to have been to form his favourite to the character and deſtination of a courtier: It is not for Britain, for its laws or liberties; — but for *Mr. Stanhope*'s graces, perfections, figure, and fortune, that our patrician is concerned. The whole plan of his education is directed and calculated to make a great, not a good man; a ſhining, not an uſeful character,—or only uſeful to himſelf, — or to the public, only for the ſake of that ſelf. To this end he recommends to him the ſemblance more than the ſubſtance of virtue; artificial manners, polite addreſs, and all the ſuperficial graces

that might attract the regard and confidence of thoſe he converſed with.

LORD Cheſterfield is a wit, has grace and eloquence, and diſplays a large acquaintance with books as well as men; but with all this knowledge, he knew not GOD. He was too polite, had too much ſpirit to be a believer, and too much pride to claſs with the common herd of mankind *, in the adopting principles and privi-

* "C'EST déja trop d'avoir avec le peuple une même religion & un même Dieu; quel moyen encore de s'appeller Pierre, Iean, Jacques, comme le Marchand ou le laboureur: évitons d'avoir rien de commun avec la multitude, affectons au contraire toutes les diſtinctions qui nous en ſeparent; qu'elle s'approprie les douze apotres, leurs diſciples, les premiers martyrs (telles gens, tels patrons) qu'elle voye avec plaiſir revenir toutes les années ce jour particulier que chacun celebre comme ſa fête. Pour nous

privileges which were common to him with his footman.

If he warns his ſon againſt the common cant and raillery of infidelity againſt religion and eſtabliſhed opinions, it is a caution, we preſume, againſt ill manners, not expreſſive of any regard to ſacred truth, or the principles of divine revelation: all his cautions

nous autres grands, ayons recours aux noms profanes, faiſons — nous baptiſer ſous ceux d'Annibal, de Ceſar, & de Pompée, c' étoient de grands hommes; ſous celui de Lucrece, c' étoit une illuſtre Romaine; ſous ceux de Renaud, de Roger, d'Olivier & de Tancrede, c' étoient des Paladins, & le Roman n'a point de heros plus merveilleux; ſous ceux d'Hector, d'Achille, d'Hercule, tous demi-deux; ſous ceux même de Phœbus & de Diane: & qui nous empêchera de nous faire nommer Jupiter, ou Mercure, ou Venus, ou Adonis?"

M. de la Bruyere, Tom. I. p. 264.

cautions of this kind, which recommend, or ſeem to recommend, virtue; are prudential, not pious: ſo pitiful a quality as piety muſt have for ever diſgraced the character of the man of birth and breeding.

As a wit and a fine gentleman, he very properly proſcribes vulgariſms, yet he has himſelf deſcended to one of the loweſt; — the unmanly railing at all womankind, from his commerce, we imagine, with the worſt of the ſex. It is certain that his Lordſhip's taſte and reading had not led him to an acquaintance with the hiſtory of thoſe ladies whoſe beauty was the leaſt of their perfections; — whoſe virgin ſanctity or conjugal fidelity has done, and ſtill does honour, to human nature; — whoſe graces have contributed

ted to the order and ornament, the peace and happineſs of domeſtic life; whoſe councils have informed princes, whoſe wiſdom has directed the reins of empire, whoſe proweſs has conducted armies, fought battles, and defended kingdoms; — whoſe zeal and ſincerity for the cauſe of GOD, and his truth, have inſpired them with the courage to brave danger and death, and to embrace the Rack and the flames.

LORD Cheſterfield's calumny againſt the whole female world is the more illiberal, unjuſt, and inexcuſable, as he beheld, with his own eyes, a living example of the foremoſt of her ſex, in rank and dignity, ſtill more conſpicuous and elevated by the purity, the

the luſtre, the majeſty of her virtues. *

HOWEVER, his Lordſhip might have been more conſiſtent in his cenſures. He had obſerved in general, that "among women, as among men, "there are good as well as bad, and "it may be, full as many or more "good than among men;" and that "all general reflections, upon nations "and ſocieties, are the trite thread-"bare jokes of thoſe who ſet up for "wit without having it, and ſo have "recourſe to common place." Nay he

* "You ſeem not to know the character of the "queen: here it is — ſhe is a good woman, a good "wife, a tender mother; and an unmeddling "queen."

Vol. 4. p. 225.

he elſewhere * preſcribes a particular reſpect to be paid to the ladies. Yet after all this, polite and noble as he was, he deſcends to traduce the whole ſex, and expoſe them in an odious and contemptible light. But conſiſtency was no part of Lord Cheſterfield's character as a writer, or he would not have cenſured the late Earl of Bath †, as long famous for his ſimulation and diſſimulation, and yet have ſeriouſly recommended and juſtified theſe qualities to his ſon.

THUS too he cenſures thoſe who cenſure courts; yet he has himſelf given ſuch a picture of courts, as does no honour to the learning, the truth, and

* Vol. III. p. 205.

† Vol. IV. p. 211.

and ſincerity of thoſe who frequent them. If he is ſometimes laviſh of his praiſes in favour of the brilliancy, the politeneſs and perfection of court-life and court-breeding, he is not leſs frank in his report of the ill faith and ill morals practiſed there. It is only the appearance of good faith and good manners which he requires in thoſe who would ſhine there: and the author, noble as he is, ſhews himſelf both illiberal and diſingenuous, in the artifice he preſcribes to be practiſed on the foibles and follies, the paſſions and prejudices of thoſe you mean to engage in your ſervice, and render conformable to your views.

His four volumes may be entitled, *An entire Code of Hypocriſy and Diſſimulation*; containing the *fineſſe*, the artifice,

artifice, the craft, the virtue, or the ſemblance of virtue, with all the external accompliſhments neeeſſary to form the character of the complete Courtier. The Chriſtian, or, in other words, the ſincere Moraliſt, will look upon the noble Lord, with all his wit, his genius, his elegance and penetration, as a little, a frivolous and ſuperficial man; engroſſed by ſelfiſhneſs, vanity and ambition; and in order to gratify theſe paſſions, a devout conformiſt to the world, its faſhions and follies; — regardleſs of the intereſts or miſeries of mortality, but ſo far as he may reap advantage from them, and profit by the follies or frailties of mankind.

THE virtue of the ancients was a ſublime and ſplendid form, a beauty that

that captivated, and was made to captivate all hearts, — a divinity that challenged univerſal homage. The Roman virtue, in particular, was of a robuſt and maſculine form, affected exerciſe more than eaſe, and vigour more than delicacy. It conſiſted in reſiſting pleaſure and pain, in conquering paſſion, in embracing or honouring honeſt poverty, in deſpiſing riches and nominal honours; --- in an obſtinate adherence to truth and duty, in oppoſition to every terror or temptation. Roman virtue, the primitive, genuine, Roman virtue, the parent of liberty, of empire and glory, was undone by the graces and delicacies recommended by Lord Cheſterfield*; and degenerated to a fribble,

* HORACE, though licentious in his ſpirit, and epicurean in his practice, ſaw and acknowledged the bene-

ble, ſhuddering at every blaſt, and bending to every ruder aſſault from domeſtic tyranny and foreign invaſion.

CATO would have exclaimed againſt the

beneficial effects, and profeſſed himſelf a friend, of true virtue; as he expreſſed his deteſtation of vice, in general, and of lewdneſs, in particular, as the ſource of that degeneracy which marked his own age, and which, in fact, was attended with the moſt baneful conſequences to the republic.

Fecunda culpae ſecula nuptias
Primum inquinavere, et genus, et domos:
Hoc fonte derivata clades
In patriam populumque fluxit. ———

———————————

———————————

Non his juventus orta parentibus
Infecit aequor ſanguine Punico,
Pyrrhumque, et ingentem cecidit
Antiochum, Hannibalemque dirum:
Sed ruſticorum maſcula militum
Proles, &c.

HORACE, Lib. III. Ode 6.

the manners and maxims of our Britiſh Peer, as big with more certain and fatal ruin to the ſtate, than a Cataline or a Cæſar. In Lord Cheſterfield, the graces are to ſupply the place of the virtues. Real, ſincere, ſubſtantial virtue, makes no part of his moral ſyſtem; or where ſomething like it is recommended, it loſes all its worth and luſtre by being directed to mere ſelfiſh and mercenary ends: and ſimulation and diſſimulation, or a well-conducted hypocriſy, is preſcribed as a ſuccedaneum, equally or more effectual to captivate and enſnare mankind, than ſimple virtue, which a courtier might think too prudiſh and pedantic a quality to make any figure in the character and compoſition of a fine gentleman.—You may fight your man, or debauch your woman, if ſhe

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is but of quality; and nothing in all this amiſs, while you conform to the faſhion and taſte of the world. Friendſhip is little more than a name, rarely to be found, and, therefore, not worth cultivating. The good opinion of the world is all that you have to conſult: by ſome means moſt men are to be caught, all women almoſt by any means. Therefore, you are to affect the confidence of every man, and the love of every woman you meet with, though you have no manner of reſpect for the one, or for the other. Study above all things to be well with both, and make uſe of them as helps to ſerve your intereſt, and favour your ambition. Converſe with all, and watch their unguarded moments: domeſticate with all, that you may hunt out the ſecrets of families: affect the

friendſhip of all, that you may take the advantage of their confidence: apply all you know, and ſee, and hear, to your own profit. That you may penetrate the ſecrets, and acquaint yourſelf with the paſſions and views of a Prince, intrigue with his whore. Become all things to all men, that you may gain all.

VIRTUE, truth, and good ſenſe, according to Lord Cheſterfield, are not ſo much to be ſtudied as eloquence; for by this laſt you will moſt advantage yourſelf: and if you are enjoined to lay in the largeſt ſtock of knowledge, it is not the better to enable you to ſerve your King and Country, but that theſe may ſerve you. Some of theſe political maxims might be proper inſtructions to a profeſſed ſpy, but are far

far below, and inconſiſtent with the dignity of one, who is ſent abroad under a public character, to repreſent the honour, and vindicate the rights of a nation.

It has been ſaid, by ſome who have peruſed theſe letters, that Lord Cheſterfield hath left it in doubt with the world, whether he had any religion or not. I think there is no doubt remaining on this head. He has not, indeed, like Lord Bolingbroke, attacked the principles of religion in form, nor explicitly declared himſelf an unbeliever; yet it is plain, from the whole tenor of theſe letters, and the advice given to his dear friend and ſon, that he would have him conſider this world as his all, and the proſecution and attainment of its pleaſures

and profits, its honours and dignities, as the one thing needful. Would a father, who knew his ſon born for life and immortality, have been ſo anxious for two inches added to his ſtature? Would a father, who knew his ſon intended for the purity and perfection of Angels, have preſcribed to him a conformity to this world, and an attachment to its pleaſures and intereſts, as the proper qualification and preparation for the next? Would a father, who had conſidered his ſon as an heir of glory, have confined all his attentions, aſſiduities, and attainments to that frail bubble, the glory of this world? Could a father, who was perſuaded, that an immortal ſpirit informed his ſon, betray ſo much anxiety for the figure and ornaments of the body; for the dreſſing of the hair,

and

and the pairing of the nails, of his immortal boy? Could the Noble Lord, with proper notions of the infinite and all-perfect GOD, as the beſt and ſupreme good, have fixed all his attention and affections on the favour and friendſhip of the world? Could any man, I ſay not of a religious ſpirit, but of a truly philoſophic taſte, centre all his hopes, his affections, his concern, his very heart and ſoul, on an indulgence to vanity, to pleaſure, to intereſt, and ambition? Theſe letters exhibit not the moral man, but the man of the world; not the patriot, but the courtier: and the ruling paſſion of the Noble Lord ſeems to be, that of an aſpiring ſtateſman, or an ambitious conqueror, to figure it in the eyes of mankind. Only, here, the paſſion is conducted with

more policy and prudence, than commonly falls to the lot of conquerors and favourites; who, generally, with leſs art and more violence, uſurp upon the common rights of mankind.

THE Noble Lord, in the advice he has given, and the proſpects and temptations he has laid before his ſon, has ſhewn himſelf as much a religioniſt, as the devil did, when he offered to the Saviour of mankind the kingdoms of this world and their glory.

ONE important leſſon, which we may, however, learn from the letters before us, is this: That noble birth, great natural abilities, a polite education, and much reading and reflection, uninfluenced by religious motives, and directed

directed to no religious end, render the poſſeſſor a poor and contemptible creature, a faithleſs friend, a falſe patriot, an immoral philoſopher; and, in reſpect to the trueſt virtue, the ſublimeſt knowledge, and the moſt important privileges of our nature, leave him poor and miſerable, and blind and naked; and, in point of real dignity, rank him lower than the loweſt of the ſervants of the Carpenter's Son.

SECT. V.

LORD Chesterfield is allowed to be a wit; but his wit is unchastised, and licentious; is sometimes indulged out of mere vanity, in violation of truth; and, we presume, against his own better knowledge: it is, however, sometimes delicate, though frequently blunt and rude; and such as might better become a licentious companion over his bottle, than the polite scholar writing, at his ease, a course of moral lectures, for the benefit, instruction, and improvement of his son.

With very lively parts, and amidst pleasu-

pleaſureable amuſements, his application and ſtudy ſeem to have been very conſiderable: he read much, but did not think intenſely: he was more pleaſed with what ſtruck his imagination, than ſtudious of what might regulate his paſſions, amend his heart, or inform his underſtanding. His literary acquirements were indeed uncommon for a man of quality. He ſeems to have well underſtood the ſtate of modern, of polite literature, both at home and abroad; and from the large fund of materials, which he had laid up in his various and extenſive reading, he criticiſes juſtly, he quotes pertinently, he applies happily. His obſervations on the Engliſh and French drama are perfectly juſt and judicious; though we think he has not done ſufficient juſtice to the ſublime

lime ſpirit which diſtinguiſhes ſome of our own dramatic writers. In this caſe he has acted againſt his own preſcript on another occaſion, and has been more ſtudious to find faults than point out beauties. His taſte was ſomewhat vitiated, as his manners were corrupted, by his attachment to the French. We deny not, nor diſpute the juſtice of the applauſe he has given to *Boileau*, *Moliere*, *Corneille*, and *Racine*. But the encomium he has given to *Voltaire*'s hiſtory of the age of *Lewis* the Fourteenth, we think altogether partial, and unworthy the good ſenſe, and moral diſcernment of the Noble Author. To juſtify this cenſure, and to prevent the ill effects which Lord Cheſterfield's admiration of this ſprightly writer may have upon the Engiſh reader, it may not be amiſs,

or

or improper, to ſtrike off, *en paſſant*, a ſhort critique upon this celebrated work; as it appears to a plain man, and a ſober Engliſhman, to one who is better acquainted with ancient than modern manners, and more enamoured of the virtues than the graces. Lord Cheſterfield's letter to Mr. *Voltaire*, ſo far as it relates to the hiſtory, or age, of *Lewis* the Fourteenth, is as follows: — "Permit me, Sir, to "return you thanks for the pleaſure "and inſtruction I have received from "your hiſtory of *Lewis* the XIV. I "have as yet read it but four times, "becauſe I wiſh to forget it a little "before I read it a fifth; but I find "that impoſſible: I ſhall, therefore, "only wait till you give us the aug-"mentation which you promiſed: "let me entreat you not to defer it "long.

" long. I thought myſelf pretty con-
" verſant in the hiſtory of the reign
" of *Lewis* the XIV. by means of
" thoſe innumerable hiſtories, me-
" moirs, anecdotes, &c. which I had
" read relative to that period of time.
" You have convinced me that I was
" miſtaken, and had upon that ſub-
" ject very confuſed ideas in many
" reſpects, and very falſe ones in
" others. Above all, I cannot but
" acknowledge the obligation we have
" to you, Sir, for the light which
" you have thrown upon the follies
" and outrages of the different ſects;
" the weapons you employ againſt
" thoſe madmen, or thoſe impoſtors,
" are the only ſuitable ones; to make
" uſe of any others would be imitating
" them: they muſt be attacked by
" ridicule, and puniſhed with con-
" tempt.

" tempt.—Give me leave, Sir, to tell " you freely, that I am embarraſſed " upon your account, as I cannot de- " termine what it is that I wiſh from " you. When I read your laſt hiſto- " ry, I am deſirous you ſhould always " write hiſtory.—Adieu, Sir, I find " that I muſt admire you every day " more and more; but I alſo know, " that nothing ever can add to the " eſteem and attachment with which, " I am, &c *." This cannot be called a mere compliment, paid by a friend to an author, upon a new publication, as Lord Cheſterfield has repeated his approbation and applauſe of Mr. *de Voltaire*'s works in general, and of this in particular, in other letters to his ſon.—How juſt this encomium

* Lord Cheſterfield's Letters, Vol. III. p. 346-7.

is,

is, may appear by the few following ſtrictures.

HONESTY, or a ſevere regard to truth, ſhould be an eſſential ingredient in the compoſition of an hiſtorian. There are ſeveral remarks, in this hiſtory, on the Pope, the Cardinals, and Jeſuits, which would incline one to think the author was ſincere and open: but when we conſider the privileges claimed by the Gallican Church, and find the Pope humbled by *Lewis* the Fourteenth, we ſuſpect our author is but paying a compliment to his country, and would *ſeem* rather an enemy to the court, than to the Church of Rome: I ſaid *ſeem*; for, at the bottom, I believe him a friend to no denomination of chriſtians, though he has bolted out heretic and ſchiſmatic

ſchiſmatic upon occaſion, and branded with infamy men better than himſelf.

I NEED give you no other proof of his diſhoneſt conduct, than by referring you to his chapter of Calviniſm; and will only quote you his own words, without troubling you with other authority, to confront the aſſertions, and ſet aſide the falſehoods of this writer.

IN the beginning of this chapter he calls Calviniſm (ſome might infer Chriſtianity) a new peſt, which has laid waſte the world: he derives it from the republican ſpirit, which animated the firſt churches. This, though we do not call it a plain falſehood, we know is not agreeable to truth: for, never were better ſubjects than the primitive chriſtians. But his deſign

is

is to ſtigmatize all the Proteſtant Churches. And for what reaſon? Becauſe they formed the ſtrongeſt bulwark againſt the encroachments of his immortal hero, and were reſolved to live independent of a temporal and ſpiritual tyranny.

But let us conſider the crimes of theſe perſecuted people; and thence we may beſt judge of the equity of their puniſhment. *Lewis*, ſays our hiſtorian, was exaſperated at them. What was the cauſe, will our hiſtorian ſay? Were they in rebellion againſt their Prince? Did they call in foreigners to invade the kingdom? Or did they refuſe the payment of taxes laid upon them? He ſays, no ſuch thing. But the king was moved by the continual remonſtrances of his clergy; by the inſinuations of the

Jeſuits and the Court of Rome, by the Chancellor *Le Tellier*, and by *Louvois*, his ſon. "*Lewis*," it is to be confeſſed, "was wholly a ſtranger to the "fundamentals of their doctrine, and "regard them as *old revolters*." *Voltaire* himſelf allows, that during the factions of the *Fronde*, and the civil wars excited by the Princes of the blood, the Parliament and the Biſhops, they obſerved a pacific conduct, and made offer of their ſervice to the king. He further owns, that *Colbert*, the Great *Colbert*, protected them as uſeful ſubjects; and that *Mazarine* was ſo ſenſible of their good conduct, that he admitted them into all the offices depending upon the revenue: nay he ſays, that though their fathers have been rebels under *Lewis* the Thirteenth, their ſons were become good ſubjects under *Lewis* the Four-

Fourteenth. Thoſe very madmen (ſo he calls the reformed of the *Cevennes*) would never have taken up arms without the revocation of the Edict of *Nantze*. That they had not been in any eminent manner obnoxious to the government, appears from this, That their churches, according to Mr. *Voltaire*, were taken from them on the moſt ſlender pretexts, upon the moſt *frivolous pretences* *; and that the oppreſſions they laboured under, were covered over with a *form of juſtice*;—the higheſt aggravations, I ſhould think, to an honeſt man's miſery.

But his beſt reaſon for this perſecution of the Proteſtants is ſtill behind. *Lewis*, it ſeems, conſidered it as one of thoſe enterprizes, which

* P. 206—209.

was productive of that luſtre of glory, of which he was in all things fond even to idolatry*. And thus confiſcating their eſtates, depriving them of their children, impriſoning, dragooning, hanging, and breaking upon the wheel, or burying alive, are lawful and juſtifiable, as being the merciful means employed to aggrandize the monarch's glory, and to make converts to the charitable religion of Jeſus Chriſt.

SOME tender expreſſions of humanity ſhould, one would think, upon this occaſion, have dropt from a writer, who ſeems charmed with delicacy of taſte, ſoftneſs of manners,

* P. 213.

the

the cultivation of the graces, and the endearing charms of ſocial life.

A BIGOTTED Heathen, familiar to the ſight of Chriſtians expoſed in the Theatre to the hungry jaws of wild beaſts, could not have expreſſed leſs pity for the ſufferers, than our enlightened Philoſopher, our abhorrer of Chriſtian blood, does at the recital of ſuch mercileſs inhumanity.

YET, all this while, the ſufferers are in the fault. It is the pretended reformed religion, and its dogmatic ſpirit, that occaſions this bloodſhed: the orderers and executors of ſuch helliſh tragedies are free from blame. "Such," ſays he, "was the nature "of Calviniſm, that it neceſſarily pro-"duced civil wars, and ſhook the

" foundation of ſtates." Whereas the remark ſhould have been, had he drawn his concluſion from his premiſes; 'Such is the nature of Popery 'and falſe glory, that they deſtroy 'humanity, cancel even the obligation 'of natural religion, ſacrifice thou-'ſands without remorſe or pity, and 'deluge kingdoms with chriſtian 'blood.'

And ſuch, I will add, is the nature of infidelity, that it ſwallows the groſſeſt falſhoods, and publiſhes them to the world, and miſrepreſents and prevaricates without fear or ſhame. An Infidel is fitted for any cauſe, but that of truth; will even defend Popery, though he denies Chriſtianity, and adore a tyrant, though he deſpiſes GOD.

When

WHEN firſt I took up *Voltaire*, and had read ſome pages, I conſidered him as a ſprightly writer, with a tender heart, and thought him a lover of mankind: but his chapter of Calviniſm ſoon convinced me what was his humanity; as the court and character of *Lewis* ſhew what was his morality. He writes like a man of mode, and has formed his politics and his morals, not from books, but from his commerce with the world.

POLICY of any ſort, righteous or unrighteous, if it be but ſucceſsful, is with *Voltaire* and with *Lewis* wiſdom; and corruption is an honeſt art: eclat is glory, though it be but the parade of guilt: and conqueſt is greatneſs and happineſs, though it is founded on injuſtice, and might ren-

der millions miſerable. The reign of *Lewis*, when conſidered in a true light, and diveſted of the falſe colours which the hiſtorian has bedaubed it with, was the reign of pomp and pleaſure, of corruption and ambition, of madneſs and miſery. His glory was falſe, becauſe his virtue was not true. Vanity was his ſupreme paſſion, and to be talked of, his ſupreme delight. Juſtice and humanity were trifles in the way of his ambition. Whatever was profitable and conducive to the ends he propoſed, was to him lawful: goodneſs was a ſilly name, not heard of at court, and ſupplanted by that phantom glory. Virtue was not cultivated, but ſplendor was ſtudied. The depth of others' miſery was the height of *Lewis*'s glory. Greatneſs was in *Lewis*'s eye, and in his hiſtorian's,

rian's, the ſhewy pomp of arms and conqueſts, not the harveſt reaped from great and good actions done, or miſeries ſuffered in the cauſe of virtue, for the ſupport of truth, and for the ſake of public happineſs, tranquillity and ſafery.

WHAT is ſhining, affects *Voltaire* more than what is ſolid; or he is all the while talking or writing againſt his better knowledge; gilding ambition, luſt and folly with polite appellations, and ſacrificing religion, virtue and truth to the idol of *Lewis*'s glory. His flattery of the monarch is really too groſs and apparent, and very ill becomes a writer of ſo free and ingenuous a ſpirit. He ſeems to be playing the ſycophant to the living, rather

rather than writing an impartial hiſtory of the dead.

His partiality to his country is as evident, as the Duke of Marlborough's victories are poorly and malignantly told: while *Turenne*'s fine campaign is ſure to be celebrated: and yet this was more ſignalized by the fire, devaſtation and miſery he ſpread, than by one battle fought or gained by ſuperior courage and conduct. And I believe any one, truly acquainted with the particulars of this ravage, and the cruelties exerciſed in the Palatinate, will call *Turenne* a dog of hell, rather than a Chriſtian hero. Yet this, it ſeems, was but a ſpark, compared to the ſecond deſolation of it. *

* P. 254.

As

As a writer, I confeſs that Mr. *Voltaire* is lively and entertaining. He has not the flegm of the Engliſh. He is ſometimes happy in ſurpriſing his reader, and is fortunate in contraſt and compariſon. He is an admirer of wit, of which he has been all his life a careful collector: he has taken pains in ſecret hiſtory, and would, I dare ſay, take more pleaſure in finding a modern anecdote, than in recovering a fragment of Plato or Livy. He would have made a rhetorical preacher. an oſtentatious actor; and a better favourite at court, than a ſtateſman, as he loved intrigue more than buſineſs: as a gentleman, he would have been enterprizing; as a miniſter, a lover of wit, pleaſure, and pomp, a promoter of arts, and an encourager of ſcience. In love, he would have been gallant

gallant and romantic; in an embaſſy, generous and ſplendid.

He is better verſed in modern manners and modern politics, than in the true knowledge of human nature, or the ſpirit of ancient legiſlation and ancient heroiſm. True virtue, and the diſtinctions of moral good and evil, are ſcarce perceivable in his book. Feaſts, carouſals, magnificent pleaſures, the ſplendor of diverſions, delightful entertainments, polite arts, polite converſation, refinement of taſte, vivacity and wit, a decent gallantry, noble gallantry, eaſe and elegance, are in our Chriſtian hiſtorian of the ſame eſteem and credit, as contempt of pleaſure, contempt of riches, inviolable chaſtity, honeſt poverty, ſevere juſtice, extenſive goodneſs, cou-

rage

rage unappalled, a love for our country, and reverence for the gods are in our Pagan Livy. And hence it is, — Though he has not directly attacked virtue, yet he has beſtowed abundant colouring and ornament on vice. Guilt is no more than gallantry; and greatneſs of ſoul (who could believe it?) is to change a miſtreſs with diſcretion, and without diſtracting public buſineſs? *

The faſhion ſeems to have been with *Voltaire* the ſtandard of morals; and the graces of more value with him than the virtues. Have but delicacy and politeneſs, and our author will not queſtion your faith or your religion. One reaſon of his antipathy

* Vol. II. p. 47.

to

to Calviniſm is, that it is pedantic, and betrays a ſavageneſs of manners. His religion is as bad as his morals, a vague detail of raſh doubts, formed from common appearances: he ſeems to have known as little of true philoſophy, as of true virtue, and to have borrowed his religion, as he has done his ethics, from the gentle ſyſtems of modern free-thinking; which are, indeed, well ſuited to a witty Frenchman, who is too lively to reaſon, and too gay to think.

IT is difficult, he tells us, to determine what it is that gains or loſes battles *. At other times he ſays, that our conduct and our enterprizes depend abſolutely on our natural diſ-

* Vol. I. P. 86.

poſitions,

poſitions, and our ſucceſs upon fortune *. He gives us more inſtances than one of the power of chance in deciding battles. At other times he is divided between fate and fortune; but this laſt ſeems to be his favourite; terms, which he ſubſtitutes in the room of Providence. "Fortune," ſays he, "did that (the reſtoration of "Charles the Second, of England) "which theſe two miniſters, *Don* "*Lewis* and *Mazarine*, might have "had the glory of undertaking, &c." But hear what our noble Lord Clarendon ſays upon this occaſion, a writer who ſaw far into the ways of GOD and man; and who, in reſpect of genius and knowledge, as well as virtue, is as much to be preferred to

* Vol. I. P. 42.

Voltaire,

Voltaire, as Socrates is to Lucian. "The King's condition was, he ſays, "concluded to be in a ſtate of deſpair, "till men were confounded by ſuch "an act of Providence, as GOD hath "ſcarce vouchſafed to any nation, "ſince he led his own choſen people "through the Red Sea *." And afterwards; "In this wonderful manner, "and with this incredible expedition, "did GOD put an end to the rebel-"lion that had raged near twenty "years:" and again, ſoon after; "By "theſe remarkable ſteps among others, "did the wonderful hand of GOD, "in this ſhort ſpace of time, not only "bind up, and heal all theſe wounds, "&c. †" He had before told the

* Clar. Vol. VI. P. 691.

† Vol. II. P. 772-3.

reader,

reader, " that the whole machine [of " the reſtoration] was ſo infinitely " above his [the General's] ſtrength, " that it could be only moved by a " Divine hand; and it was glory " enough to his memory, that he was " GOD's inſtrument in bringing thoſe " mighty things to paſs; which, doubt- " leſs, not one man living had of him- " ſelf, either wiſdom to foreſee, or " underſtanding to contrive, or courage " to attempt and execute *."

Now, which of theſe two hiſtorians deſerves moſt credit upon this ſubject? He who was a living witneſs, and a careful obſerver of the tranſactions of thoſe times; who was preſent and privy to every meaſure taken to

* P. 708.

promote or retard the reſtoration, and who had a large ſhare of learning, both human and divine?—Or he who writes near a hundred years after the tranſaction, talks by hearſay, and judges at random, who retails the dregs of Epicurus for the object of our faith, and gives us the froth of modern free-thinking for the hiſtory of philoſophy?

In the thirty-third chapter, he condemned ſome doctrines of Janſenius, as neither philoſophical nor conſolatory. And will he call his ſyſtem of a world, governed by chance, philoſophical? Or will mankind think his principles, by which they are left to nature, fortune, or fatality, conſolatory? It has, I confeſs, ſurprized me much, and gives us a melancholy

proſpect

proſpect of the ſtate of our morals and religion, to hear that the demand for this book has been ſo great. What has not that nation to fear and expect, which can laugh under the gloom of ſcepticiſm, and delight in miſery and no GOD!

It will be ſaid, his character as a wit, and an entertaining writer, has recommended him.

I own he has ſome merit as a writer, but it is greatly overbalanced by his licentiouſneſs as a moraliſt. Nor can I allow his talent at writing ſo eminent, as by the ſucceſs of his book it might be judged. He has as much vanity, but more levity, than Tacitus: but, at the ſame time, he has more good nature, could we ſtrike out

his chapter of Calviniſm. His very good nature, ſeems rather a national, or a conſtitutional gaiety, never checked by misfortune, nor qualified by diſtreſs, but enlivened by converſe, wit, and the Belles Letters, than a rational humanity, founded on the principles of reaſon and religion.

His remarks are ſometimes juſt, but they are ſometimes notoriouſly falſe; generally pleaſe, rather than edify; and, are fitted for ſurprize, rather than inſtruction. He is ſmart, rather than ſolid; lively, than witty; airy, than ſublime; and more florid than deep: a ſceptic in his principles; a ſophiſt in his arguments. In words, an aſſertor of morality; in fact, a deſtroyer of it. A profeſſed admirer of philoſophy, which he recommends from

modern

modern diſcoveries, while he is really an aſſertor of ancient epicuriſm. He is an enemy to religion, and theology, from the accidental miſtakes which the profeſſors of both have been guilty of. The unhappy effects flowing from the perverſeneſs of nominal chriſtians; the miſchiefs committed by faction and ambition, wearing the maſks of religion, he lays to the charge of religion and chriſtianity in general.

In ſhort, you meet in *Voltaire*, with a falſe virtue, a falſe wiſdom, a falſe happineſs, a falſe heroiſm, and a falſe glory; and at the bottom of all, not the beſt heart.—I mean a heart not imbued with true religion, the only foundation of whatever is wiſe, and great, and good, and happy, in human nature.

SECT. VI.

FROM Mr. *dé Voltaire*, let us return to Lord Chesterfield. His regard for his friend, --- the brilliancy of the court of *Lewis* the Fourteenth, with the pomp and magnificence of the great monarch --- propitious as he was to science, to taste and genius, and the noble Lord's distinctions between moral good and evil, being depraved by his commerce with the world, might possibly influence him in his judgment, in the applause he has given, and the admiration he has expressed for this work of *Voltaire*.

How far this commerce with the

world can influence the judgment, is abundantly clear, from the faithful portrait, which the noble Lord hath given us of himſelf, and from the honeſt confeſſion he has made, in the courſe of theſe Letters, of his own practice and principles; — a confeſſion which we ſhould have valued, and a portrait which we ſhould have admired the more, had he not affected to juſtify both the principles and practiſe by a ſhew of reaſon and argumentation.

THE dreſſing of the hair, the ſtrapping of the ſhoes, the cleaning of the teeth, and the pairing of the nails, may be matters of moment, and, in his Lordſhip's phraſe, "of infinite importance," worthy the care and attention of a fribble, but ſeem below the

the ſingular notice of a moraliſt and a philoſopher: but, to recommend intereſt, ſelf-love, vanity and ambition, as the proper motives of action, is, we conceive, an inſult upon common ſenſe, and upon all the moral ſyſtems that have yet been publiſhed to the world; except we might perhaps juſtify it by the tenets of Epicurus; and if we ſhould deſpiſe the philoſoper, we muſt both deſpiſe and abhor the patriot, who ſhould defend or advance ſuch principles as have their foundation in the corruption of our nature, and terminate in the deſtruction of public virtue, public liberty, and public happineſs. His roundly pronouncing * Curtius and Leonidas to be two diſtinguiſhed madmen, is ſuch

* Vol. I. p. 321.

an

an outragious contradiction to eſtabliſhed notions, to our cleareſt ideas of the pureſt and ſublimeſt virtue, and ſuch a blaſphemy committed againſt the ſpirit of patriotiſm, as will never be forgiven him by any claſſical or moral reader, by any lover of GOD, or of his country. "Greater love, than "this, hath no man, that a man lay "down his life for his friends," is one of thoſe maxims of eternal truth, not peculiar to, though moſt ſignally illuſtrated by, the proceſs of the Chriſtian diſpenſation, and by the life and death of its divine Author, but which approves itſelf not only to the moſt perfect reaſon of individuals, but to the common ſenſe and natural feelings of every age and nation upon earth; who have conſidered, and ſometimes revered, as ſomething more than mortal,

tal, thoſe heroes and patriots, who have devoted their lives to the ſalvation of their country. Courtiers, as well as patriots, with the flattering friends, and the factious enemies of the ſtate, have generally been aſhamed of, and diſavowed all ſelfiſh principles, and aſſigned the public good as the motive of their conduct and councils; and nothing, we preſume, but the proſpect of ſecreſy in theſe confidential Letters from a father to a ſon, could have induced the noble Lord to advance and avow ſuch principles.

But there is nothing we can wonder at, in the principles of Lord Cheſterfield, after we have ſeen the patrician and the father deſcend from his dignity and duty, and commence procurer and pander to his ſon; — acting

acting the part of a bawd, and giving him direct leſſons of lewdneſs: he marks down, he ſprings the game for him; he cheers him in the chace, by aſſuring him of ſucceſs. From a nobleman ſo diſtinguiſhed for delicacy of ſentiment and manners, we could not have expected that an illicit and promiſcuous commerce of the ſexes would have been recommended or connived at, or that paſſion and brutal luſt would have been allowed, as the motive and meaſure of human conduct, in violation of the order and peace of ſociety, and in contradiction to the dictates of uncorrupted * nature and reaſon.

WHEN

* DEINDE quum M. Claudius circumſtantibus matronis iret ad prehendendam virginem, lamentabiliſque eum mulierum comploratio excepiſſet, Virginius,

WHEN he propoſes ſelf-love, vanity, intereſt and ambition, as the proper motives to human conduct, he affects to make ſome apology, and to offer ſome reaſons in vindication of his paradoxes: but in the libertine advice he has given to his ſon, he uſes no ceremony, nor palliates his advice, as if conſcious of its impropriety or immorality. We ſhould naturally hence conjecture, that the noble Lord had neither wife, ſiſter, or daughter, in whoſe virtue he might think his own happineſs and honour, or the honour

ginius, intentans in Appium manus, "Icilio," inquit, "Appi, non tibi filiam deſpondi: & AD "NUPTIAS, NON AD STUPRUM EDUCAVI. PLA- "CET PECUDUM FERARUMQUE RITU PROMIS- "CUE IN CONNUBITUS RUERE? Paſſurine hæc "iſti ſint, neſcio, non ſpero eſſe paſſuros illos, "qui arma habent."

LIV. Lib. III. p. 182. Edit. Hearne.

and

and happineſs of his family any way concerned.

In comedy and romance we have ſometimes looſe ſcenes exhibited, looſe ſentiments expreſſed, and lewd characters and examples held out to us, as copies or pictures of ordinary life, and the real manners of the times:--- but leſſons of lewdneſs, given profeſſedly and coolly by a father to his ſon,--- pleaſure taught and recommended as a neceſſary expedient in buſineſs, is ſuch a novelty and refinement in the ſyſtem of good breeding, is ſuch an outrage done to decency, and to the moral ſenſe generally entertained by mankind, ſo contrary to nature, and the uſual workings of parental affection, that we cannot eaſily account for it, unleſs we might be

be allowed to ſuppoſe, that the father, by engaging the ſon in the ſame criminal commerce, intended to flatter or juſtify their common conduct, and to detract from the infamy of both.

BUT, perhaps, there is ſome injuſtice in this laſt reflection. Lord Cheſterfield appears not conſcious of any infamy from his illicit commerce with the other ſex, or that any diſhonour attended the illegitimacy of his ſon; whom he publiſhed, not without ſome pride, in moſt of the courts of Europe. The truth may ſeem to be this. He writes, to uſe his own expreſſion, as a man of pleaſure to a man of pleaſure: but being, as he acknowledges, paſt the quick ſenſe of it himſelf, he was perhaps willing to refreſh his imagination by dwelling

on the gallantries of his ſon, and by renewing the memory of his own amours. * Nothing is more common than

* The ſentiments of the excellent *Saurin* will both explain and confirm our reflections on this occaſion: On ne s' abandonne pas ainſi á ſes ſens ſans y avoir de la douceur: & ce qu' il y a de plus funeſte, c'eſt que cette douceur que l'on goûte, demeure dans le ſouvenir, fait des traces profondes dans le cerveau, frappe l'imagination. ——— Si l'action des ſens n' étoit exciteé que par la préſence des objets: ſi l' ame n' étoit agitée que par l'action des ſens, un ſeul moyen ſuffiroit pour ſe garantir des paſſions: ce ſeroit de fuïr l'objet qui les émeut. Mais les paſſions font d'autres deſordres encore. C'eſt cette forte impreſſion qu' elles laiſſent dans l'imagination. Lors qu' on ſ'eſt abandonnè á ſes ſens, on a goûtè de la douceur: cette douceur frappe l'imagination; & l'imagination ainſi frappèe des plaiſirs que l'on a trouvés, en rapelle le ſouvenir, & ſollicite l'homme paſſionnè de retourner vers ces objets qui lui ont été ſi doux.

C'est pour cela que les vieillards ont encore quel-

than this proceſs in the depravity of human nature. We have ſeen, in other inſtances, beſides this before us, the

quelquefois des reſtes malheureux d'une paſſion qui ſemble ſuppoſer certain conſtitution, & que l'on croiroit éteinte, dés que cette conſtitution n'eſt plus. Cette pénſée, que tels & tels objets furent la cauſe de leurs delices, eſt encore chere á leur ame: ils en aiment le ſouvenir; ils les font entrer dans tous les diſcours; ils en font des portraits flatés, & ſe dédommagent en racontant leurs plaiſirs paſſés, de ce qu' ils leur ſont interdits par la vieilleſſe. C'eſt pour cela encore qu'il eſt ſi difficile á un homme qui a donné tête baiſſeè dans le monde, d'y renoncer au lit de la mort. Il eſt vrai qu'un corps accablé de maux, une nature preſque éteinte, des ſens entierment amortis, ſemblent peu propres a laiſſer dans un homme de l'amour pour les plaiſirs ſenſibles. Mais cette imagination frappée par les impreſſions des plaiſirs paſſés, lui dit que le monde eſt aimable, que toutes les fois qu'il s'y eſt abandonné, il a goûté un plaiſir réel, que toutes les fois au contraire, qui'l a voulu entrependre des actes de religion, il á reſſenti

the lewd father triumphing in the lewdneſs of his ſons; into whoſe intrigues we have known him, as eagerly and joyouſly inquiſitive as if he had been in ſearch of their virtues and perfections. But a letter of lewdneſs containing inſtructions how to w—re with diſcretion and credit, is one of thoſe monſters which ſtrikes us with horror at firſt ſight; and we can ſcarce conceive more deteſtation for the ſon who murdered his mother, than for the father who thus murders his ſon: and as none but an unnatural tyrant would have dared to perpetrate the former, ſo none but a debauchee of

de la peine. Cette vive impreſſion donne á un pareil homme de l'éloignement & du dé goût pour la vertu: elle tourne ſans ceſſe ſon ame vers ces objets que la mort va lui enlever, en ſorte que ſans un miracle de la grace, il ne peut devenir ſenſible à d'autres.

Sermons de Saurin, Tom. 2. p. 397. 8, 9.

quality

quality would have profeſſedly avowed and attempted the latter. If, as the noble Lord obſerves, (reflecting on the Abbè Fenelon) no bawd could have written a more ſalacious letter to an innocent country girl, than the director did to his pupil; it is certain, that no pimp or pander could have wrote more ſalacious letters than the noble Lord has done to debauch his own ſon. We may add, upon this occaſion, that Lord Cheſterfield had little room to accuſe the Abbè of hypocriſy or diſſimulation, as ſometimes in the ſame letter, he encourages and directs the lewd amours of his ſon, * nay points out to him a particular lady as the object of criminal paſſion, and with the ſolemnity of an Apoſtle calls upon GOD to bleſs him: elſewhere

* Vol. 4. p. 230.

he beſeeches him for GOD's ſake to make himſelf maſter of thoſe graces and accompliſhments, which are to gain him the men, and gain him the women. And it is ſomething remarkable, that an Engliſh fox-hunter is treated as a bear, and held out as a monſter, which ſhocks his Lordſhip's delicacy, and one would ſuſpect, threatened the diſſolution of his frame: but when a French w—re of figure is the game, the chace, it ſeems, is honourable, and the exerciſe ſuch as tends to the poliſh and perfection of the man.

I WOULD not charge the Noble Lord's portrait with deeper or darker colors than belong to it: I will not therefore accuſe him of entertaining the principles of ſpeculative infidelity, not-

notwithſtanding his acknowledged prejudices in favour of ſome eminent infidel writers. He read much; and it is not eaſy to reconcile a tolerable knowledge of books with a favourable opinion of infidelity; and indeed, in point of argument, his Lordſhip has clearly decided in favour of the Believer. Yet, in fact, Lord Cheſterfield ſeems to have been as much a Mahometan, or a Jew, as a Chriſtian. If we may judge of men's principles by their practice, it appears by theſe letters that Lord Cheſterfield had no thought or concern at all about religion. Habit and practice oftner ſuperinduce principles, or lead to no principles at all, than theſe operate to influence the practice. Avarice, drunkenneſs and other vices may frequently be obſerved, not founded, we believe,

lieve, in the ſpeculative principles of infidelity, and yet inconſiſtent with every principle of the Chriſtian religion. The ſtateſman and the courtier have very ſtrong and peculiar temptations to this practical infidelity. Charmed as his Lordſhip was with the honours and eclat of a court, he could not eaſily reconcile his paſſions and practice to the precepts of humility and poverty of ſpirit, of ſelf-denial and ſelf-abaſement. Anxious, as he was, to pleaſe men, he could not be the ſervant of GOD. Admiring, as he did, the harmony of periods, the elegance of diction and the pomp of elocution, he could not well reliſh the natural and genuine ſimplicity of the goſpel ſtyle. Relying, as he did, for the ſucceſs of all his views and meaſures on human prudence and policy, we ſhould not

not wonder, if he excluded the agency of Providence, in the conduct of human affairs. Devoted entirely, as he was, to the world, to its natural and civil advantages, we expected, as we find, that he ſhould not beſtow a thought, or extend a wiſh to the future, ſpiritual and eternal ſtate. A courtier ſo ſpruce, ſo dreſſy, ſo faſhionable, ſo anxious for his perſon and perſonal elegance, that he pretends to preſcribe to the minuteſt circumſtances in dreſs and deportment, could have little conception of that moral greatneſs, which conſtitutes the inner man of the heart; as the ſincerity and truth in word and deed, preſcribed to the ſcholars of the goſpel, was altogether inconſiſtent with the verſatility and duplicity, the artifice and flattery, the ſimulation and diſſimulation, permit-

ted and recommended as moſt neceſſary in forming the character and addreſs of his favourite pupil. Noble, as he was, and converſant among nobles, ſtudious of the refinements of civil policy, and the maxims of ſtate, admitted to the perſons and councils of Princes, he may be ſuppoſed to have had little reliſh for the fooliſhneſs of preaching, or deference to the ſentiments and authority of the Carpenter's Son, and the fiſhermen of Galilee. His wit and delicacy muſt be ſhocked by the ſimplicity of their manners and maxims; and the meanneſs of their birth and ſtyle in life, would procure them little or no regard from the man of faſhion and family. Many other cauſes may be aſſigned for Lord Cheſterfield's practical infidelity, which do not at all affect the truth and reaſonable-

ableneſs of revelation. For inſtance, dulneſs and devotion being in his Lordſhip's ideas, ſynonimous terms; who could expect that the noble Lord ſhould hazard his character as a wit, and renounce the applauſe of men, for the ſake of a ſupreme love of GOD, in which true devotion conſiſts, and, which is recommended as the firſt and leading principle by the Founder of our Chriſtian ſchool?

THE ſpirit of the goſpel is ſo different from the ſpirit of the world, that it was impoſſible Lord Cheſterfield, with all his paſſions and vanity about him, ſhould enter into the kingdom of GOD, or, in other words, be a ſincere and ſpiritual believer. Would he have given any ſupport or authority to the cauſe of chriſtianity, he ſhould have

have been the moral man; the humble enquirer after truth; the cool and conſiſtent reaſoner; the unprejudiced philoſopher: — characters which never have been, nor ever can be united in the enemies of chriſtianity. We allow him the reputation of a wit, a genius, a ſtateſman and a courtier; — but in compliance with the dictates of eternal truth, we cannot allow him the honour — an honour greater than that of courtiers and kings — an honour that cometh from GOD only — the the honour of being a chriſtian.

LET the unbeliever, if he pleaſes, enliſt him in his order, and derive all the credit he can to his cauſe from ſo illuſtrious a diſciple. Chriſtianity muſt gain reputation and ſtrength by ſuch adverſaries; and the diſpenſation and wiſdom of GOD be only more confirmed

firmed by the vices, the vanity and folly of the men, who oppoſe them. Behold the great man devoid of the principles of the chriſtian religion! What, and who, is the wit, the genius, the courtier and ſtateſman? — A man of univerſal complaiſance, without one grain of benevolence, — affecting your confidence only in order to betray and deceive you; profeſſing all languages and all knowledge, not to direct the mind and benefit mankind with uſeful diſcoveries, but merely to qualify him to play a better game, and to over-reach the man he has to deal with; — a powerful ſpeaker and maſter of all the graces of elocution, but applying his oratory not to promote the peace, the intereſt, the honour and liberty of his country, but ſolely to diſplay his own vanity, or to

ſerve the ends of a party, — fraught with a grace, or rather a graciouſneſs and overflowing courteſy to all mankind, not expreſſive of any real beneficence or friendſhip towards them, but to flatter their paſſions, and to render them devoted to his views; — a man of honour, yet not reſtrained by any moral obligations from violating the wife or daughter of the friend who entertains him; — a genius capable of ranging through heaven and earth, to comtemplate the moral and ſpiritual diſpenſations of GOD, ſtooping his high born faculties, and confining them to a taſte for the works of art and man's device, or to the gratification of ſenſes which he has in common with the brutal order; — the mighty man ſubject to diſeaſe and diſtreſs in common with the loweſt of the

the people; — but as in the higheſt fortune, impious and ungrateful, ſo in the loweſt without ſupport or comfort. See here the man of taſte, the man of elegance, the man of letters, the ſenator, the orator, the patrician, the miniſter of ſtate, the counſellor of kings, when deprived of the influence, and diſcharged from the authority of religion, unſteady, fluttering, ſervile, uniform only in ſeeking the gratifications of his own paſſions; and to this end ſacrificing his time, his manhood, his honour, his truth and friendſhip, diſavowing every virtue, or diſcrediting and debaſing, by accommodating, it to ſordid and mercenary ends, — to make the fineſt figure at court, or at a ball; — to be diſtinguiſhed as the fineſt orator in the ſenate, in order to be the foremoſt in power and place; and to

improve

improve and to apply his time and talents, the beſt qualities of body and mind which GOD has given him, to the intereſt and advancement of his little ſelf. Lord Cheſterfield's beſt virtue is only a decent and polite vice; and it has no other ſtandard or rule than the eye and opinion of the public. Its objects are preeminence in life: its inſtruments are of the moſt poliſhed kind, as the moſt effectual to promote the ends propoſed.

THE views he entertains and conſtantly holds out to his ſon diſcredit all the prudential advice and leſſons of wiſdom which may be collected from theſe letters. Confined as they are by the noble Lord to the attainment of pleaſures, the profits, the honours of our preſent precarious and ſhort

ſhort lived exiſtence, they are nothing more than leſſons of lewdneſs, of avarice and ambition, — the beſt and moſt effectual means which occurred to our noble philoſopher from his experience, his reading and reflections, to make you rich as the treaſures, great as the titles and honours, and happy as the pleaſures of this world can make you.

LET then the infidel race challenge Lord Cheſterfield as their own, and what, after all, is the new ſubject of their triumph? A nobleman without true honour;—a ſenator more regardful of his own applauſe, than of the laws and liberty of his country;—a citizen ambitious to engroſs the moſt lucrative offices of the ſtate; a man without feeling or friendſhip for his kind; a reaſonable being propoſing

and

and purſuing as his beſt and moſt important good, an indulgence in pleaſure, and the gratification of his groſſeſt paſſions. Let the unbeliever ſay, whether a religion, whoſe fundamental principles are faith in, and a ſupreme love of GOD, obedience to his laws and ſubmiſſion to his will: a religion which enjoins ſincerity and truth in all our words and actions, calls for our benevolence to all mankind, exacts the diſcharge of duty both to GOD and man upon the principles of conſcience, at the expence and at the hazard of all we have. A religion which eſtimating the true value and little moment of all earthly attainments, acquiſitions and enjoyments, points out to our proſpect a future and immortal ſtate, and requires as the condition of our title to that ſtate a courſe of uniform

ſorm diſcipline, the practice of the ſocial, the moral and ſpiritual duties. Let the unbeliever ſay, whether ſuch a religion as this, does not give dignity to the loweſt, and add luſtre to the higheſt characters in life; and whether Lord Cheſterfield under the influence of ſuch a religion had not been a better man, a better citizen, a ſincerer friend, a firmer patriot, a more uncorrupt ſenator, a more upright ſtateſman, and a more illuſtrious nobleman? Such as he is, and has ſhewn himſelf, in theſe letters, if the infidel ſect will ſtill claim him as their own, we freely and frankly give him up, body and ſoul, to be made the moſt of, by theſe doctors in the minute philoſophy. Let them hold out, as an example and an honour to their principles, the inſinuating flatterer, the in-

ſidious friend, the faithleſs gueſt, the infamous pander, the betrayer of innocence and beauty, the vain orator, the venal patriot, and the ambitious ſtateſman.

SECT.

SECT. VII.

THOUGH appearances make againſt the noble Lord, yet we are willing to believe, for the honour of chriſtianity and of his Lordſhip, that he was a practical rather than a ſpeculative unbeliever, and that his commerce with this world had naturally and inſenſibly erazed out of his thoughts all taſte, all concern for, and aſpirations after a future and immoral ſtate. The man of wit, of gallantry and pleaſure, the courtier, the orator, the ſtateſman, the nobleman were the characters in which he affected to ſhine, and in which he found he moved moſt gracefully and to his

advantage: but they were characters, all which had immediate reſpect to this world, and which could receive no improvement from, if they did not abſolutely exclude, the ſublime virtues, the abſtracted and ſpiritual graces of the chriſtian life. His Lordſhip by the large ſhare which he poſſeſſed of fame, of flattery and fortune, by the diſtinction of rank and title, would be leſs ſenſible of the corruption, the meanneſs and miſery of his nature, of the need he had of a redeemer and ſanctifier, of the authority of a ſuperior, or of any greatneſs or highneſs more exalted than Cæſar's. The great and the noble, ſwimming in plenty, and accuſtomed to command, think it below them to ſeem to want, and diſgraceful to obey or ſubmit, though to the morality of

GOD

GOD himſelf. They muſt, they will be ſuperior to the common herd of mankind, though it is in guilt and folly; and would be as much aſhamed of ſeeming to want any inſtruction from prieſts, from preachers, and holy enthuſiaſts, as they would be to be caught in an act of lewdneſs, or petty larceny.

THE mere man of quality is a perſon of the higheſt importance, in his own and in the eyes of all about him: he is beheld at a diſtance with ſilent wonder; he is approached with ſubmiſſion and awful reſpect; — he is addreſſed with ſervility and abject flattery; he decides and dictates magiſterially; he is believed implicitly; he is obeyed abſolutely. His tone is high, his manner affected; — his ſmile diſdain-

ful; — his gait is ſlow and ſtately, and the whole man of a ſtyle and order that ſpeak his ſuperiority to the low bred vulgar. The man of quality is ſeen in his dreſs and motion. His word is law; who dare diſpute it? His dictates oracular; who ſhall doubt or deny them? His fortune gives him all, and more than all he wants; his ſtation commands a homage more than he is intitled to: though he may not be believed, yet all fear, all affect to fear or flatter him: he has no faults or failings, whom none dare cenſure or reprove. To a man thus intoxicated by his ſituation, and ignorant of his real ſtate by nature, the ſpiritual truths and humble graces of the goſpel appear ſtrange things; and all religion is, with him, cant and enthuſiaſm. Who ſhall teach him? Who is lord

over

over him? Knowing no ſuperior on earth, he denies or forgets the GOD who is above; and will dethrone the Judge of heaven and earth, rather than ſubmit to his tribunal. What an indignity muſt it be to a Peer of the Realm, to be told, that he muſt believe and obey, live and die, and be judged in common with other men, with his very ſlaves and tenants, and the loweſt of the people; — that he is ſubject to the ſame law, and liable to the ſame condemnation; that he has not a more immortal ſoul, nor a better title to higher degrees of glory in a future ſtate, than plebeians and mechanics; except from his exertion of ſuperior virtues, moral excellencies, and higher perfections!

My Lord's habit of thinking is

made up of quite a different ſet of ideas.—The refined breeding of the *beau monde*, the graces of the outward man; rank, dignity, place, penſion, title;—the preſent ſtate of politics; the diſtant proſpect of things; the aſpirations of the ambitious; the efforts of the factious: — camps, intrigues, battles, balls; changes and revolutions, foreign and domeſtic, in church and ſtate; company and high connections; the buſineſs, the pleaſure, or amuſements of the day: — theſe ſo much engage *my Lord*, that he finds no leiſure, need, taſte or inclination for the abſtracted truths, and ſublime ſpeculations of moraliſts and divines, — low-bred cloyſtered pedants, or at beſt reſpectable hottentots, and mere barbarians in the knowledge of politeneſs, life and manners. He reads, if he

he reads, in order to form his taſte, to adjuſt and harmonize his periods, to improve and animate his eloquence, or to acquaint himſelf with the intereſts and policy of the different ſtates and princes in Europe: but the goſpel, being no ways ſuitable to theſe ends, and reſpecting chiefly the intereſt of a future and unknown world, he thinks it an unneceſſary and unprofitable waſte of time to ſpend a thought about it. The world is that ocean in which this great Leviathan takes his paſtime, and leaves the proſpect and proviſion for futurity to thoſe vulgar ſouls, who have not a preſent and a more certain game to play. In this caſe, we conceive, he may not be determined by reaſoning or ſpeculative arguments, but by mere habit, by his ſituation and

and connections in life, to embrace the principles of infidelity.

THE wit and the great man will preſerve his favourite character in every ſtation and circumſtance of life; and unable to attend, he will celebrate and rehearſe his own funeral with all the pompous ſolemnity of patrician greatneſs *. Fortune, ſtation, nature, paſſion, and the world have formed in him habits and opinions as abſurd and ridiculous, as if he profeſſedly lived and died, without GOD and hope in the world.

LORD CHESTERFIELD, amidſt the

* LORD CHESTERFIELD, a ſhort time before his death, appeared in public in the moſt pompous and ſplendid equipage. This occaſioned ſome ſurprize in the beholders, who were told by my Lord, or ſome of his train, that he was *rehearſing his funeral.*

natural

natural and moral ills under which he laboured affects the philoſopher. It is a more pompous and ſounding name than that vulgar one, a Chriſtian. But had his lordſhip been influenced more by things than words, by the ſolidity and weight of argument more than by the appearance and vanity of ſcience, he had not been aſhamed of Chriſtianity, the trueſt and ſublimeſt philoſophy that ever enlightened the ſons of men; he had not lamented his being cut off from ſocial life, and his being reduced to ſilence and ſolitude, and the condition of a lonely ghoſt: he had diſcharged the duties and ſupported the calamities of life with more firmneſs and alacrity, and he had braved the terrors of death with more decency, courage and comfort, than appeared

peared in the wit and humour affected on this ſolemn occaſion.

We cannot eſteem highly his wiſdom who riſques his whole fortune upon the chance of a card. What then ſhall we think of him who throws the die for eternity with a real or affected indifference what ſhall be his portion for ever *. A fiddle and dance are

* The importance of the ſubject will juſtify our inſerting the following ſerious and ſenſible obſervations of M. de la Bruyere.

Apres toutes les convictions que nous devons avoir de notre religion, je ne ſai comment il ſe trouve des gens d'une impiete aſſez déterminée pour faire parade de leur irreligion au moment de la mort. Seroit-il poſſible qu'ils ne fuſſent éfraiez par tout ce qu'a d'affreux & de terrible cette derniere heure ? Je ne puis croire malgre la feinte aſſurance qu'au dehors ills eſſaient de montrer, que leur ame ſoit dans une vraye tranquillité ; ce calme exterieur eſt

are altogether as ſuitable to the character and circumſtances of a dying man,

eſt faux, cette intrepidité trompeuſe. Quand l'eſprit n'auroit à ſoutenir que les ſeules frayeurs de la mort, je ne parle pas des triſtes reflexions ſur le paſſé, des ſuites encore plus horribles de l'avenir, il me ſemble que ce ſpectacle doit d'econcerter la plus inébranlable fermeté.

J'ai lû dans le Socrate Chrétien de Mr. de Balzac une Hiſtoire qui me déconcerte moi-même. Il dit qu'un Prince étranger étant à l'article de la mort, le theologien proteſtant qui avoit coûtume de prêcher devant lui, vint le viſiter accompagné de deux ou trois autres de la même communion, & le conjura de faire une eſpece de confeſſion de foi. Le prince lui répondit en ſoûriant, " Monſieur mon ami, j'ai " bien du déplaiſir de ne vous pouvoir donner le " contentement que vous deſirez de moi, vous voi- " ez que je ne ſuis pas en état de faire de longs diſ- " cours : je vous dirai ſeulement en peu de mots que " je crois que deux & deux font quatre, & que quatre " & quatre font huit, Monſieur tel (montrant un " mathematicien qui étoit là preſent) vous pourra " éclaircir des autres points de notre creance."

man, as vanity and wit. The many inſtances of drollery and humour, which Lord Cheſterfield exhibited, which he ſeemed to have ſtudied in order to figure the more on his laſt ſtage, and whch are handed about in pamphlets and public papers, can appear no more than a diſplay of ill-timed foppery, and proofs of vanity and af-

N'Y-A-T,IL pas dans ces paroles quelque choſe de monſtreux ? Eſt-ce aveuglement, ou bravade d'eſprit fort ? Eſt-ce inſenſibilité ou oſtentation ? une homme mourir dans ces ſentiments, faire gloire en mourant de croire la verité des nombres, & de n'avoir que cette creance ? Puis qu'il ſait ſi parfaitement que " deux & deux ſont quatre, & que qua- " tre & quatre ſont huit," il aura tout le tems de calculer les années d'une éternité malheureuſe.

EST-IL tems de goguenarder à l'heure de la mort ? La plaiſanterie peut-elle être plus hors de propos ? Avons nous oublié que c'eſt là le moment que dieu s'eſt reſervé lui-même pour ſe railler des impies ?

M. DE LA BRUYERE, Tom. 2. p. 20.

fectation,

ſectation, and remind us of the French lackey mentioned by *Rochfaucault*, who, juſt before he was broke upon the wheel, entertained his ſpectators with a dance upon the ſcaffold erected for his execution.

MANY great characters, beſides Socrates, philoſophers, heroes, ſaints and martyrs have been diſtinguiſhed and recorded for their reſigned deportment at this awful moment; and ſome have diſplayed peculiar chearfulneſs and ſerenity; and not improperly; as theſe were expreſſive of their peace and innocence in a cauſe, which they thought the cauſe of truth and God. But our noble Lord, affecting to rank among theſe heroes, unluckily begins his triumph, before the day of trial, or of battle appeared. His triumph was therefore premature and impertinent.

The

The philoſopher, the hero, and the martyr ſuffered an unjuſt, an unnatural or extraordinary death. Their arguments, therefore, and their elevation of ſoul under ſuch ſufferings, the more raiſe our attention, admiration and applauſe. But the Lord Cheſterfield's natural death, amidſt peace and plenty, honour and reputation required no extraordinary effort to ſupport it. His figuring therefore, upon this occaſion, and indifference expreſſed for what ſhall become of him for ever, is mere rant and extravagance, — a vain and wanton ferocity, unſupported by any rational and religious motives, and which the author would have to paſs for the dictates of calm philoſophy.

LORD CHESTERFIELD had ſagacity enough to ſee and lament the errors of

of the human mind, and he had ſenſibility enough to feel and acknowledge the calamities incident to human nature; but he had not greatneſs of mind enough to accept the humble and healing truths of the goſpel, peculiarly ſuited to aſſiſt mankind in ſupporting and improving thoſe calamities, and in chaſing away thoſe errors. The goſpel, though the dictate and manifeſtation of eternal truth, muſt naturally revolt the noble Lord, when it would reduce him to the character of a miſerable ſinner, or humble and contrite penitent. The graces of the ſpirit would be laughed at, if recommended to the man who admired — ſingularly admired the graces of the dancing-maſter, or who made all the graces center in a dancing-maſter. Neither Jeſus, nor his diſciples were

polite, well-bred gentlemen, from whom you might learn the art of pleaſing men — the air of a court or the addreſs of a courtier.

"BLESSED are the meek, — bleſſed "are the poor in ſpirit,—bleſſed are the "pure in heart,— bleſſed are they who "do hunger and thirſt after righteouſ-"neſs," are moralities of ſo meagre, ſo mean, and humble an aſpect, that they might become a cell, a cottage, or a cloyſter, but could never be intended for the uſe, or enter into the practice of the man of the world, the man of wit, the man of gallantry and faſhion. Noble blood reſents the affront offered it in impoſing ſuch trite, ſuch thread-bare, ſuch illiberal ſtuff, — the dreams of platonic madmen — hot-brained enthuſiaſts and ghoſtly impoſtors,

poſtors, upon the modern gentile world. Brotherly love and charity are vulgar antiquated terms, in the room of which the Noble Lord has ſubſtituted inſinuation, addreſs, adulation, attention, aſſiduities, and all the external graces of a ſtudied complaiſance. Lord Cheſterfield was evidently a man of this world; the wiſdom of GOD therefore in revealing, and directing our views to another, muſt be no better than fooliſhneſs in the eſtimation of his Lordſhip.

It is well that Lord Cheſterfield has given us all his heart; we thence learn, as we have before obſerved, how poor and miſerable, how blind and naked, is human nature, animated with wit and genius, poliſhed by education, improved by reaſon and reflec-

tion, and refined by courtly manners, without the influence and advantage of religion. We ſee wit evaporating in vanity; genius and eloquence terminating in ambition; the paſſions degenerating into lewdneſs; wiſdom confined to human policy and intrigue; good faith and good conſcience ſupplanted by profeſſion and outward ſeeming; benevolence baniſhed by good manners; friendſhip by complaiſance; ſincere virtue and a ſteady faith by ſelf-love and a prudential philoſophy; and all the devoirs of life, reſpecting what we owe to GOD and man, contracted to the narrow view of pleaſing and gratifying Self.

LET us ſuppoſe Lord Cheſterfield had admitted Chriſtianity to influence his faith and practice: had he been leſs honour-

honourable, or deemed ſuch, by his ſubjection to the Almighty? Had he been leſs happy under the protection, the order, and guidance of an all-wiſe and all-gracious Providence, than as ſubject to fortune, chance, or nature? Had not ſincerity, openneſs of manners, and cordial chriſtian benevolence, contributed as eaſily, and effectually, to eſtabliſh his character in the world, and conciliate the love of mankind, as artificial addreſs, diſſembled friendſhip, and French grimace? Had his Lordſhip's name at this day been held leſs ſacred, or had he been leſs reſpectable in the eyes of his King and Country—had he been known to have ſerved both from principles of loyalty and love, not from motives of intereſt and ambition? Had his Lordſhip's prudence been arraigned, if he had

added to the wiſdom of the ſerpent, the innocence of the dove; or if he had improved and applied thoſe excellent rules he has given us for the improvement of our time, regularity and diligence in buſineſs, to more extenſive views than thoſe which are confined to the bounds of mortality? Had the Noble Lord been leſs a moraliſt, had he, inſtead of inflaming the paſſions, and prompting to licentious pleaſures, endeavoured to correct the malignity, and eradicate the depravity of human nature? Had he been leſs a philoſopher, had he taken in GOD as a neceſſary agent in the proceſs of nature, and favoured us and himſelf with ſome rational, if not pious, reflections, on his infinite providence and perfections? Had his Lordſhip's genius, or literature, been diſcredited by

by their being employed in recommending to mankind in general, and to his ſon in particular, the love of virtue, of glory, and immortality? Had the Noble Lord departed from his dignity, in acknowledging himſelf ſubject to the Lord of heaven and earth, an imitator of divine perfection, and an aſpirer after the eternal exiſtence and happineſs of the celeſtial orders? Do we not ſee a meanneſs and degradation in the Noble Lord's ſpirit and character, when we obſerve him a mere man of this world, a mere animal, and like his fellow-animals, providing for no more than his preſent being, without an eye lift up to heaven, or a thought for his future exiſtence? *Poor human nature!* we will ſay with his Lordſhip—poor, yet proud, proud of its nothingneſs, of its feathers, its

ribbands, and rattles—of its errors, ignorance, and blindneſs—proud of the popular breath, of the ſmiles of a court, and the promiſes of a courtier; of deceiving and being deceived—of living to vanity and lies—the dream of the day—the ſhadow of a momentary exiſtence:—Whilſt we are afraid or aſhamed of acknowledging our wants, would be thought great and honourable, wiſe and knowing, happy and independent, rich, abounding in all things and wanting nothing; and to conceal our poverty and nakedneſs, would renounce the bounty, and reject the bleſſings of heaven itſelf. We really pity the Noble Lord, labouring under diſtreſs, yet above ſeeking any help, or entertaining any hope from heaven; a feeble mortal, yet independent of his Maker; helpleſs, yet

yet renouncing or foregoing all helps from the Almighty;—without comfort in life, and, what is ſtill worſe, without comfort or proſpect in death, and making our very infirmities, which ſhould be the ſubject of humiliation, motives to prayer, and recommend to us a Redeemer and Deliverer, a kind of apology for, and juſtification of all the pride, the follies, the vices, the inconſiſtencies, and extravagancies of human nature.

We cannot help ſmiling at his Lordſhip's French haſh of complaiſance and good manners, which he would preſent us with in the room of the old faſhioned Engliſh repaſt, good faith and a good conſcience: but we are really inclined to pity the Noble Lord, when amidſt the diſtreſſes of nature,

upon

upon the appearance of his diſſolution, we find him ignorant, or, in ſupport of his pride, affecting to be ignorant, that there is a GOD above him, or that he has an immortal ſoul: we lament the weakneſs of human nature, when we obſerve the Noble Lord, with honours and titles thus mean, with fortune thus poor, with wit thus ridiculous, with reaſon and philoſophy ſo deficient in knowledge, and the art of ordinary computation.

Poor human nature! conſcious of, yet aſhamed to acknowledge its wants; and though a beggar, too proud to aſk aſſiſtance of the Supreme Lord of Heaven and Earth. Miſerable condition of mortality, when uninfluenced and unſupported by the principles and power of religion! To be weary of a ſilly

a ſilly world, ſenſible of the wretched bargain of life; to feel the *fragment of his wretched carcaſe, and the timbers of his crazy veſſel* running down to decay, yet, careleſs of conſequences, and without hope and proſpect of repair or reparation, ſpeaks a degeneracy which a heathen philoſopher would have been aſhamed of;—a pride which nature ſhrinks from and abhors, and which decency and common ſenſe, reaſon, as well as revalation, condemn. Socrates and Seneca act the proper part, ſtand forth like heroes, and diſgrace that affected inſenſibility and indifference, that ſubmiſſion to nature and its laws, to any thing, or nothing, after death, expreſſed by the Noble Lord on this ſolemn ſubject.

MAY we not ſuppoſe the truth to have

have been this? That the Noble Lord affected to figure as a wit, an orator, and a Peer of Great Britain: and ſuppoſing this world to be the whole of human exiſtence, he poſſeſſed his ſhare of fame and fortune, and with this he was content; and as he did not naturally reliſh, he could not eaſily admit a future ſtate, wherein moral and ſpiritual diſtinctions only would have place, would advance to ſuperior degrees of honour and happineſs, and where a Peer of Great Britain might poſſibly rank below peaſants and ſlaves.

We wiſh that theſe letters had afforded us an occaſion of exhibiting the Noble Lord in a more amiable, more exalted, and more ſplendid, that is, in a more Chriſtian light;—a wit decent and chaſtiſed, an orator ſpirited

ed in the diſplay, and powerful in the recommendation of truth and virtue; a patriot ſteady and brave, in promoting the benefit, and aſſerting the rights and liberties of his country; the man open, ſincere, and benevolent; kind, yet firm; placid, yet reſolute; acting, and acted by convictions of conſcience;—animated and elevated by the principles of divine truth, by faith in the preſent GOD, and the proſpect of his future kingdom and glory, and exalted and tranſformed by divine love and heavenly hope to a greatneſs and dignity, a ſplendor and love, beyond all that Kings, and courts of Kings, can exhibit and beſtow.

But happy it is for mankind, that the eternal truth of GOD is fixed, is uniform

uniform and unchangeable; without this, we may obſerve, to what various opinions, abſurdities, and immoral principles; miſled by the infirmity of nature, the influence of paſſion, the vanity of wit, the oſtentation of ſcience, the conjectures of reaſon, the authority of great names we muſt be expoſed. GOD, and his truth, reſpect not the diſtinctions of perſons and characters in life; great and little, high and low, are equally ſubject to the authority of the Almighty: his favour and acceptance are equally and equitably promiſed to all thoſe who love and obey him. The wit and the Peer of Great Britain are regarded as mere moral agents in the eye of the Holy and All-perfect GOD: and human dignities, and diſtinctions, titles, and names of honour, muſt be conſi-

dered

dered by the high and Holy One, who inhabiteth eternity, as the effects of our ſinful pride, the characteriſtics of our vanity, of our meanneſs, and littleneſs. The humble, the devout, the good heart, is what alone can recommend us to the regards of our Maker. Wits are feathers, and nobles more contemptible than ſlaves, when they intrench upon the prerogatives, and affect to be like or above the Moſt High.

THE truly great and reſpectable in the eye of GOD, by the rule and law of reaſon, is he who from a conſciouſneſs of his weakneſs, his worthleſſneſs and nothingneſs, humbles himſelf in the duſt before the throne of the Almighty, accepts and obeys his truth however made known to him, reſigns

reſigns himſelf to his Providence, co-operates with him in promoting the happineſs of mankind, and from a conviction of the vanity of a paſſing life, extends his views, and builds his hopes on a future and immortal ſtate. Void of ſuch a rational and moral conduct as this, the richeſt among mankind are but beggars, the wiſeſt, are but fools, and the nobleſt mean and degenerate — the phantoms of a day, the mock-heroes of a ſtage, trembling under their ſtep, and haſtening every moment to a ruin. The greateſt, diſtinguiſhed by titles, by offices and honours, by opulence by luxury, by ſplendour and equipage, eminent for wit, for taſte, for literary accompliſhments, and every external advantage of life, but ignorant of, indifferent to, or deſpiſers of ſacred truth,

and

and of the relation they ſtand in to GOD its author, in the eye of reaſon are without real dignity and honour; without ſecurity, ſteadineſs or a proper reliſh of the beſt fortune, without ſupport or comfort in the worſt; ſlaves to ſenſe and paſſion; blind to the beauties and glories of GOD in his works of Creation and Providence, uninformed by immortal truth, unanimated by any immortal proſpect, unacquainted with peace of conſcience, ſtrangers to the exalted delight of communion with GOD by devotion and prayer, and hurrying down the precipice of life with the gloomy expectation of periſhing for ever.

WHAT dignity of ſentiment or character can we expect or admire in ſuch a conduct as this? Without princi-

ple or virtue the hero is a murderer, the ſtateſman a ſtock-jobber, and the firſt peer of the realm only the moſt illuſtrious plunderer. Without principle and virtue prudence is but cunning, and wiſdom ſhort-ſighted artifice; wit is licentious, and good manners are inſidious; complaiſance is hypocriſy, and profeſſion of friendſhip treachery; ſplendour is a painted cloud; power a raging tempeſt; riches a ſordid maſs; nobility a ſhining but peſtilential meteor; and all the diſtinguiſhed eminence and valuable poſſeſſions of man, no better than the flower, or flowery dream of yeſterday.

SECT.

SECT. VIII.

UPON a free and impartial review of Lord Cheſterfield's Letters, you ſee what a poor and contemptible figure the noble Lord makes, as a Moraliſt and a Patriot; as a Father, a Senator or a Briton. To give his readers a hearty deteſtation of the principles and practices recommended in his letters; and to confirm them in the antiquated principles of virtue and religion, let us exhibit the out-lines and ſome of the ſtriking features of that genuine and manly virtue which was adopted, practiſed and recommended by the patriots and ſages of ancient Greece and Rome — was taught in their ſchools, was maintained in the

forum, and aſſerted in the ſenate; was incorporated with their laws, inſpired the love of liberty, and animated the ſeveral orders of the ſtate to do and ſuffer all things for the happineſs and glory of their country.

VIRTUE would one of thoſe ſages have ſaid, conſiſts not in verbal trifling, in formal definitions, in ſchool diſtinctions, and in the ſubtle refinements of metaphyſical or political ſophiſts *: but it is a divine ardor of the ſoul

* IN a quotation from Baron *Monteſquieu* made by Lord Cheſterfield for the uſe of his ſon, it is ſaid, "In monarchies the principal branch of education "is not taught in Colleges or Academies. — The "virtues we are taught here, are leſs what we owe, "to others, than to ourſelves; they are not ſo much "what draws us towards ſociety, as what diſtin-"guiſhes us from our fellow-citizens. Here the ac-"tions

ſoul better felt than defined or deſcribed, warming the heart, engaging the paſſions,

" tions of men are judged not as virtuous, but as " ſhining; not as juſt but as great, not as reaſon- " able but as extraordinary. When honour here " meets with any thing noble in our actions, it is " either a judge that approves them, or a ſophiſter " by whom they are excuſed.

" It allows of gallantry, when united with the " idea of ſenſible affection, or with that of con- " queſt: — it allows of cunning and craft, when " joined with the notion of greatneſs of ſoul or im- " portance of affairs;, as for inſtance, in politics, " with whoſe fineſſes it is far from being offended. " It does not forbid adulation, but when ſeparate " from the idea of a large fortune, and connected " only with the ſenſe of our mean condition. ———

" Truth in converſation is here a neceſſary point. " But is it for the ſake of truth? By no means. " Truth is requiſite only, becauſe a perſon habitu- " ated to veracity has an air of boldneſs and free- " dom. — In proportion as this kind of frankneſs is " commended that of the common people is deſpiſed,

paſſions, captivating the affections, informing and charming the whole man into a love of truth and honour, of GOD and goodneſs, and animating him with a ſpirit and fortitude to do and

" which has nothing but truth and ſimplicity for its " object. — The education of monarchies requires " a certain politeneſs of behaviour. — But polite- " neſs, generally ſpeaking, does not derive its ori- " ginal from ſo pure a ſource. It riſes from a de- " ſire of diſtinguiſhing ourſelves. It is pride that " renders us polite: we are flattered with being " taken notice of for a behaviour that ſhews we are " not of a mean condition. ———

" A COURT air conſiſts in quitting a real for a borrowed greatneſs. The latter pleaſes the courtier " more than the former. — At court we find a delica- " cy of taſte in every thing, a delicacy ariſing from " the conſtant uſe of the ſuperfluities of life, from " the variety, and eſpecially the ſatiety of pleaſures, " from the multitude, and confuſion of fancies, " which, if they are but agreeable, are ſure of be- " ing well received. — Here it is that honour inter- feres

and ſuffer all things, in the proſecution of his favourite objects, which alone he affects and aſpires after, though at the expence of his eaſe, his pleaſure, his intereſt, his reputation, or even of life itſelf.

LEAST of all has ſelfiſhneſs any connection with virtue, and is the meaneſt and moſt infamous principle that was ever aſſigned or recommended as a motive to the conduct of rational beings: for what are avarice and ambition, fraud and rapine, hypocriſy

"feres with every thing; — to this whimſical ho-
"nour it is owing that the virtues are only juſt
"what it pleaſes; it adds rules of its own invention
"to every thing preſcribed to us; it extends or li-
"mits our duties according to its own fancy, whe-
"ther they proceed from religion, politics, or mo-
"rality."

LD. CHESTERFIELD'S LET. Vol. 3, p. 32, &c.

and flattery, corruption and bribery, gaming, luxury and lewdneſs, with all the fopperies, follies, vanities and vices in faſhion, but the effects of that ſelfiſhneſs, which Lord Cheſterfield has recommended as the ruling principle of his ſon's conduct.

VIRTUE — would Socrates and his followers, would Cicero, Seneca, and Antonine, would Livy and Cato have ſaid; — virtue is an immortal principle, which came down from heaven, and points to heaven: it is immutable as well as immortal: it is the conſtitution of GOD in nature, and recommended by every motive, that ſhould influence a rational being. It is equally binding at all times, and in all places; upon all orders and degrees of men; upon maſters and ſlaves, upon

on ſubjects and ſovereigns. It ſtamps dignity upon the loweſt, and beſtows the only true honour upon the higheſt characters in human nature. Its intrinſic excellence diſdains all artificial appearances, or external ornaments. Without it princes are the mockery of majeſty, nobles are plebeians; and with it plebeians tread on the necks of nobles.

VIRTUE belongs to no peculiar ſtation or character in life. It is the duty, the ornament, the happineſs, the honour of every reaſonable being. It is of the ſame value, power and dignity in a priſon as in a palace, in a cottage as on a throne. It is only diſtinguiſhed by the oppoſition it meets with, by the pains and penalties it undergoes, by the pleaſure it reſiſts, by

by the paſſions it conquers, and by the falſe glory it deſpiſes. It ſeeks no ample theatre for it diſplay, nor the trumpet of fame to report its praiſes to the world; but is content with the plaudit of conſcience and the approbation of heaven. Virtue is independent of fortune and honours, of place or titles: it is often richeſt in poverty and great in its humility, it riſes by oppoſition, and ſhines moſt illuſtrious in the ſhade. It is more vigorous than wit, — more lovely than beauty, more auguſt than power; more beneficent, more pleaſing than juſtice; more arduous, more enterpriſing and ſublimer than ambition. It is powerful without friends, ſatisfied without fortune, and great in its contempt of, and ſuperiority to the world. It affects neither plenty nor want, but

content

content with the diſcharge of duty, leaves the perquiſites of office to others. It affects no ſtate or pomp. It is mighty in its own ſtrength; magnificent in its own greatneſs; without gold or purple, ſhines by its own native ſplendour, and is a conqueror without the eclat of a triumph.

VIRTUE is decent, modeſt and retired, except when conſcience calls it forth, and duty puſhes it forward to a more arduous and public exertion. It labours, though ſilent, yet unwearied; perſevering though oppoſed, and ſpirited though depreſſed or neglected. Watered, foſtered, and refreſhed by the dews of heaven, it grows and flouriſhes though unheeded; and is abundant in precious fruits

regard-

regardleſs of the ungrateful hand that gathers them.

VIRTUE, genuine virtue ſeeks no favour, but that of heaven; reſpects no eye, but that of GOD. It conſiders the loweſt ſtation, as the appointment of Providence, and a ſphere ample enough for the diſplay of its proweſs: and it annexes true honour and happineſs, only to the faithful diſcharge of duty and conſcience. Virtue, if it cannot command, is content to deſerve ſucceſs, and is ſatisfied with the loweſt place, as the place of honour, where it miniſters to duty, and affords a ſubject of patience and magnanimity, in doing and ſuffering the will of GOD.

VIRTUE would conſider as the greateſt

greateſt inſult, and the fouleſt diminution of its honour, the bribe of avarice and ambition, — the temptation to luxury and lewdneſs, as the price of its conduct and concurrence, in any meaſure propoſed, or duty exacted. It is delicately ſenſible of any approach to vice, though gilded with the faireſt appearance, and recommended by the moſt ſplendid examples. Secrecy itſelf would not tempt it to betray a truſt; to an infraction of faith, or to violate its ſanctity, though heaven and earth could be ſuppoſed aſleep, or to connive at the violation. Virtue is ſuperior to dejection and fear: conſcious of its own intentions and ſincerity, it is not anxious to pleaſe, or fearful to offend. Satisfied in a good conſcience, and of having given no juſt cauſe of offence, it bears

bears no ill will,—it apprehends no injury, nor ſtands in awe of the frown of a ſuperior. It knows no ſuperiority, it reſpects no power, it reveres no greatneſs, it adores no divinity but what is founded in moral excellence, and ſuperior goodneſs. It reverences the honeſt ſlave above the flagitious Peer or Prince. Virtue is hardy to enterprize, and vigorous to perſevere; is neither damped by the neglect of the great, nor moved by the contempt and reproaches of the world. It heſitates not at doubts and difficulties, nor is timid and cautious of daring danger or incurring cenſures. It advances wherever duty calls, and would rather run the hazard of a defeat, than be wanting in the proſecution of a brave and honeſt attempt. It betrays no ſervile fear, nor is practiſed in a

ſtudied

ſtudied and laboured complaiſance. Virtue fears none but GOD, and acknowledges no authority but that of heaven. It receives no direction but from the Divine Will, and knows no dependence but on the Divine Power. It is of too ſtrong a habit, and of too maſculine a complexion to ſtoop to the delicacies of faſhionable life, or to the preſcribed forms of polite addreſs, and artful inſinuation. Superior to flattery as to falſhood, it is conſtant to the truth: it looks, it ſpeaks, it acts the dictates of the heart: unbyaſſed by fear or favour, unbroken by pleaſure or pain, by the effects of proſperous or adverſe fortune; it contends for the truth with a ſimplicity, ſincerity and ardour that do honour to the cauſe; and would rather loſe than gain an advantage by any indirect methods

of

of profecuting and promoting it. Virtue is ſuperior to injuries and affronts: conſcious of its own native ſtrength, it is unhurt by the one, and deſpiſes the other. It were not virtue that ſhould depend for its exiſtence and exerciſe on the good will or malice of others. It were no temple ſacred to, and inhabited by the divinity of truth and virtue, that ſhould ſuffer violation from the falſhood, the injuſtice and impiety of men. The out-works may be defaced or demoliſhed, but true virtue, the divinity of the place, is and muſt be for ever inviolable, unaſſailable, unimpaired and impregnable againſt every attempt that may be made againſt its firmneſs and compact conſtruction. Virtue is a ſtranger to repulſe and diſgrace. Its very efforts are honourable, where they meet not with

with ſucceſs; it is even the more diſtinguiſhed by diſappointment, and riſes more illuſtrious from a fall. Beggared, baniſhed, diſgraced and tortured, it is ſtill virtue; and the more ſo from the fortune, the diſgrace, the baniſhment and beggary it undergoes.

VIRTUE is the repreſentative and ſubſtitute of GOD in the ſoul of man. It ſupports, it confirms, it ſtrengthens, it ſanctifies, it exalts him above the frailties of nature, and the terrors of mortality. It gives him a power invincible, a ſtrength invulnerable, a peace inviolable, a faith immoveable, hopes immortal, and a ſpirit infinite and incompreſſible.

VIRTUE is the only ennobling qua-

lity, the only nobility in nature. Artificial nobility, the creation of mere policy or power, and conferred on the vicious, the venal and the baſe has no name or place in the temple of honour. It is the great ſoul alone, the heroic action, or the beneficent deed, that ſpeaks the great man, and tranſfers his name with honour to future ages. The eminently virtuous, though proſcribed by power, and damned by the voice of the ſenate and people, challenge the firſt honours of the ſtate, and are entitled to the moſt laſting memory in the records of fame; while the vain and ambitious, the public pillager, the betrayer of his friends and country, every corrupt dependent on a court, though diſtinguiſhed by the moſt ſplendid titles and offices, which imperial favour can beſtow, are ex-

poſed

poſed to the curſe of the preſent, and doomed to oblivion, or to the juſt reproaches of all future ages. Virtue adopts as her ſons of honour the humbly good, and makes a contempt of fame the beſt title to fame. Virtue admits no blood for patrician, which is tainted with ignorance or folly, pride or paſſion, with vice or corruption. Virtue confers the coronet, a crown and kingdom, on him alone who is maſter of himſelf, who conquers his paſſions, who beholds with an undazzled eye ſuperfluous riches, ſuperficial honours, and empty titles, the blandiſhments of falſe pleaſure, and the eclat of falſe glory.

A FAILURE in virtue is a forfeiture of title: a character debaſed and inverted is more conſpicuouſly infamous;

and the Nobleman deſcending to the low arts, the vile practices, and corrupt manners of baſe and vulgar ſouls, in departing from his proper character, forfeits his dignity and title in life, and renders himſelf an object of ſuperior ſcorn, and more deſerved contempt. Great names and illuſtrious titles, diſtinguiſhed by corruption, by degeneracy and licentiouſneſs in principle and practice, exhibit a peculiar malignity; as the ſun and ſtars converted into blood would ſtrike us only as more ſignal and horrible portents. When Princes commence tyrants, and Nobles degenerate into ſervile ſycophants, or modiſh debauchees, virtue razes their names from the records of time, or damns them with immortal infamy.

VIRTUE, if it is ſevere and awful as the GOD who inſpires it, is like him juſt, benevolent, and altogether lovely. Sincere in its views, and upright in its intentions, it has nothing to fear or to conceal; and, ſecure in a good conſcience, it diſdains all ſervility or flattery, or any indirect means to attain its end, and carry its views into execution. It is generally happy in the effects it produces, as it is honeſt in the means it employs. Sincere virtue commands the eſteem and confidence of all who deſerve it; while complaiſance only attempts to enſnare the credulity of thoſe upon whom it is practiſed. The plainneſs and ſimplicity of the language of virtue ſpeaks its ſincerity and veracity; while the courtier's ſtudied phraſe, profeſſion of compliment, and voluminous expreſ-

ſion of kindneſs, juſtly render him ſuſpected. The benevolence of virtue is ſeen by deeds, not by words. The delicacy of feeling is heightened by the perfection of virtue; and the ſenſibility of nature is improved by its purity. The moſt virtuous have always been the moſt compaſſionate, the moſt ready to inſtruct and to inform, to give and to forgive: they content not themſelves with verbal condolence, and affected ſympathy, but ſhew their good will by honeſt advice, by friendly remonſtrances, and by real benefits procured or conferred on the unhappy. Virtue is not confined by ſelfiſh or partial conſiderations; it embraces the whole human race as the object of its attention and compaſſion; and ſeconds the pretenſions, and promotes the intereſt, of all

all who have a claim to humanity, or wear a kindred form.

VIRTUE ſpurns, with high diſdain, the official bribe and mercenary penſion, and ſeeks not its own, but the good of others. — The dignity, the glory, the very eſſence of virtue conſiſts in its diſintereſtedneſs; — avarice, vanity and ambition, lewdneſs, luxury, paſſions of the ſelfiſh order, true virtue diſpiſes and abhors. The higheſt inſtance of ſelf-denial ſpeaks the ſublimeſt efforts of virtue, which, if it ſeeks its own good, ſeeks it as the effect or conſequence, not as the motive of duty; — or, ſeeks it as a moral good, conſiſting in the delight of doing good, and the complacency of conſcience in the approbation of heaven.

TRUE virtue co-operates with the order of Providence and the divine diſpenſations; promoting as it is able, the advantage of all; and would deem as ſacrilege any advantage procured at the expence, and to the damage of others. Virtue is the pureſt emanation and image of the divinity, that can inform the human ſoul: and the moral qualities it diſplays, truth, righteouſneſs, goodneſs, mercy are the beſt reſemblance of the moral attributes of GOD. Virtue like its great author and inſpirer, is ſteady, immoveable and uniform, of a rectitude inviolable, of a benignity, or at leaſt of a benevolence inexhauſtible, and happy in proportion to its power of communicating happineſs to others. Virtue, in the moral, like the ſun in the natural world, is not weary, nor wanders in its

its courſe, but ſheds its benign influence through the whole ſyſtem; and though clouds and tempeſts may for a time weaken its power, and obſcure its luſtre, it perſeveres in its ſteady courſe, with light and ſplendor unimpaired.

But virtue is fairer and more lovely than ſun and ſtars: theſe act not, but are acted by a natural proceſs and a neceſſary order. Virtue is the order of choice, the proceſs of reaſon and liberty, and amidſt oppoſing enemies and contending paſſions acquits itſelf a conqueror: unſucceſsful as it may be in its efforts, and ſometimes defeated in its views, depreſſed by violence, blackned by calumny, buried in the ſhade, or deformed by calamity, it is ſtill auguſt: and, like beauty and innocence

nocence in tears, more lovely and affecting than the high born proſtitute adorned with all the glitter of wealth, the delicacy of dreſs and the pomp of equipage. It is a divine vigour in the ſoul, triumphing over the darkneſs, the miſery and ills of nature, and converting them into objects of acquieſcence, complacency and tranquillity. Virtue is the image of GOD ſtamped upon human nature, refining its baſeneſs, exalting its meanneſs, enlightening its darkneſs, enlarging its littleneſs, enriching its poverty, healing its maladies, and converting its very wants, diſtreſſes and miſeries into abundance, into triumph, into happineſs and glory. Poor human nature indeed without this divine treaſure! Amidſt opulence how needy; amidſt titles and honours how ignoble and

mean,

mean, in a palace how miſerable, how contemptible on a throne!

TRUE virtue by its ſelf-abaſement, ſelf-denial, and renunciation of ſelf, gains univerſal admirers. It reſpects the public as the beſt good, and truth as the moſt valuable poſſeſſion: in their ſupport and defence, with Phocion and Socrates, it is careleſs of life and fortune, and nobly embraces poverty and death. Virtue renounces all ſelfiſh and ſenſual enjoyments, and adopts the ſocial and moral, as the trueſt and only happineſs; and raiſed above all low and vulgar prejudices and paſſions, it conſiders the cauſe of truth and the cauſe of GOD as the ſame, which it defends at the hazard of its being; yet though bold and daring to the death, virtue the child of heaven wears

wears an angel's ſmile, and is diſtinguiſhed by all the graces of its divine original: elevated and aſpiring, yet winning and attractive; benevolent, gracious, courteous and condeſcending; its features formed to complacency, its voice attuned to harmony; its eye beaming with benignity; and all its motions, though compoſed and ſteady, yet graceful, elegant and unaſſuming; modeſt without affectation, engaging without art, pleaſing without deſign or flattery, and commanding friends and admirers by a ſimplicity that is above all art and diſguiſe. Virtue, though retired, has nothing to diſguiſe or be aſhamed of;—is open, generous and unembarraſſed upon every occaſion; though humble and unaſſuming in its garb, aſpect and addreſs, it is manly and ſpirited in its conduct,

conduct, and diſplays a fortitude unſubmitting and unappalled in the diſcharge of duty.

VIRTUE is a ſteady and inflexible principle, and depends not on the accidents of time and place, or on the faſhion of the world: it ſurveys the progreſſive riſe and fall of ſtates, of nations and empires, with the ſhort-lived exiſtence, and certain and univerſal mortality of the human race; and under this conviction aſpires to a name, a character and exiſtence, which will mock the flight of ages, and ſurvive the deſolations of nature. While the courtier flutters the ſhining inſect of the day, virtue erects for her ſons a temple ſacred to immortality. The good man apprehends no death or diſſolution; invited to heaven and called

to

to glory and immortality, he ſoars above this dim ſpot which men call earth, and is loſt in the boundleſs, the infinite, the incomprehenſible progreſſion of eternity that appears to his proſpect.

YET virtue, though coloured with all the graces of heaven, has no charms or beauty, where the faculties are indiſpoſed to receive or reliſh it; and we wonder not to hear chriſtians called enthuſiaſts, or platonic madmen, when they exhibit GOD and virtue in colours too bright, and in a form too exalted for the taſte of the ſenſual epicurean philoſopher. Virtue among ſome of the ancients was painted an auguſt figure *; her countenance

* Και φαινηναι αυτω δυο γυναικας προϊεναι μεγαλας, και την μεν ετεραν ευπρεπη τε ιδειν και ελευθεριον, φυσει κε-

tenance open; amiable and elevated, with an air of conſcious dignity, and her perſon adorned with native elegance; her look with modeſty, every geſture with decency, and her garments altogether of the pureſt white: but we would convert the celeſtial Seraph into an errant ſtrumpet, in order to ſuite our taſte and gratify our paſſions. How lovely, how attractive is ſhe in her native charms, her divine beauty and happy effects! The founder of cities, the enacter of laws, — the ſupport of ſociety, the health of a ſtate, the conqueror in war, the ornament in peace; — the ſource of national order and happineſs, the ſecurity of property, the cement of

κεκοσμημενην τό μεν σωμα καθαροτητι, τα δε ομματα αιδοι, το δε σχημα σωφροσυνη, εσθητι δε λευκη.

XENOPHON MEM. SOCR.

friend-

friendſhip, — the bond of conjugal fidelity, the parent of domeſtic harmony; the peaſant's inviolable tenure; the hermit's whiſpering angel, — the proſcribed patriot's, the dying philoſopher's and heroe's ſupport and comfort! Virtue the bliſs of private life; the beſt defence, ornament and honour of public characters; — the beauty of youth, the ſtay of old age, — the ſubject's unalienable right, and to the Prince a ſecurity ſtronger than that of a crown! virtue the faireſt flower that opens upon earth, the ſweeteſt incenſe, that aſcends the ſkies!

Such was virtue in the eſtimation of ancient wiſdom; and for what are we, according to modern manners, to exchange this ineſtimable jewel! — For a place, a title, or a wh—re!

Shall

Shall this virtue, the divine image and effulgence, the impreſs of the divinity upon the human form, the only reſemblance of man to his maker; ſhall this virtue be at the mercy of paſſion and prejudice, of vice and folly; of Lords or Commons, of Prieſts or Princes, to model it according to their own intereſt, ambition or avarice? Virtue is a robe of heavenly woof and texture, which will not admit any ſhape or form which human invention, folly or faſhion ſhall give it. Let the Prince command his ſubjects! Let the patrician lord it over his ſlaves! But let not either of them preſume to dictate to the Lord of heaven and earth! Shall the immutable law of GOD, — the law of nature and reaſon be relaxed, altered or abrogated at the will of a frail, a blind and corrupt

mortal? Or has a peer of Great Britain any more authority to cancel the conſtitution of the moral, than of the natural world? The ſame right which the Lord Cheſterfield has to recommend whoredom and adultery, any other man has to recommend and practiſe calumny, pillage public or private, perjury, murder, or any other ſpecies of corruption and villainy, to which human nature may be inclined.

MAY we preſume to ſuppoſe that there is any political malevolence in the great, in thus attempting to traduce virtue, and to deſtroy its exiſtence out of the world? — That this principle which raiſes the loweſt, enriches the pooreſt, and ennobles the meaneſt, which renders every man great and independent, or dependent

on

on heaven alone, being extinguiſhed, titles and fortune, offices and honours might rear their heads aloft, and, as the only valuable diſtinctions, challenge the univerſal homage of mankind? Such degeneracy, ſuch impious artifice, can ſurely never lodge in any polite breaſt; and we ſhould rather ſuppoſe in the caſe before us, that the noble Lord's principles were the effect of his education, not ſufficiently inured to virtue, — or of his good fortune, not checked by any ſignal diſtreſs or calamity, — or of his temper and conſtitution diſpoſed to pleaſure, vanity and wit, — or of the applauſe which the laſt gained him, and that general good reputation he held among mankind; — all which might tend to hide his infirmities from himſelf, and from the inſpection

of others, to whom he laid himſelf not ſo open, as he has done in this confidential correſpondence with his ſon.

WHATEVER was the ground of his principles, it is to be lamented for his own ſake, for the ſake of his friends and of his conntry, that they were ever publiſhed to the world: they are indeed in no degree dangerous from any plauſible reaſons, or ſpeculative arguments by which he attempts to ſupport them: but the very name and *example of ſo accompliſhed a Nobleman, may have a very unhappy effect

* UNUM exemplum aut luxuriæ aut avaritiæ multum mali facit: convictor delicatus paullatim enervat & emollit: malignus comes quamvis candido & ſimplici, rubiginem ſuam affricuit.

SENEC. EP. 7.

upon

upon the morals of Britons: — and we have only to wiſh as a counter-balance or counter-ferment to the poiſon which theſe letters convey, that a patrician or patricians of the firſt name, diſtinguiſhed as much by their virtues as by their titles, revered for their reverence to the Almighty, and exalted above others for their ſuperior love to GOD and man, would ſtand forth in the cauſe of truth and virtue, and by their writings, as well as their example, reſcue morality from the violation it has ſuffered, and ſtill ſuffers from the wanton and licentious pen of Lord Cheſterfield.

A PATRICIAN thus engaged, would do himſelf the higheſt honour, and add to his other titles that of Saviour of his country. A patrician ſupport-

ing its laws, promoting or reſtoring its virtue, combating its worſt enemies, and exterminating principles, which have upon tryal proved, and muſt for ever prove moſt fatal to the ſecurity, the ſtability, the liberty, the happineſs and grandeur of ſtates and empires; — a patrician thus engaged, would be more than noble; we ſhould hail him as divine — a legate commiſſioned by heaven, to vindicate the laws of heaven, to deliver mankind from meanneſs, corruption and miſery, from falſe pleaſure, falſe delicacy, falſe honour, and falſe greatneſs, to invite the wanderer into the path that leads to the trueſt reliſh of his being, and to the ſovereign happineſs and glory of his nature.

NOBLES are not wanting, qualified by

by their learning to explain, and by their eloquence to defend and enforce the laws and liberties of their country; — and we ſee in the inſtance before us, a Nobleman diſtinguiſhing himſelf by his abilities, and powerful and perſuaſive in the art of ſeduction and vice. And ſhall no genius, no patrician, no orator appear in defence of the firſt and the beſt cauſe, the cauſe of injured truth and declining virtue? — a cauſe more important to the intereſt of the Britiſh empire, than all her taxes, all her colonies and all her treaſures; — a cauſe with the decline of which muſt decline the induſtry, the temperance, the courage, the honour and reputation, the internal order and proſperity, and the external enlargement and grandeur of the ſtate; — a cauſe, which GOD and nature

have publiſhed, and ſtill publiſh to the world, and which therefore renders our contempt of it the more impious, and our neglect of it the more inexcuſable!

SECT.

SECT. IX.

IN exhibiting the practice of Pagan Virtue, we have perhaps ſomewhat exceeded the original, and borrowed ſome colouring from a diviner ſource; as the latter platoniſts, we are well aware, have adorned and improved philoſophy with ſublimer truths and more exalted moral documents, than were known to the ancient profeſſors. It is in the ſchool of Jeſus alone, that we have the light of truth, and the perfection of virtue, without the art, or the ſtudied eloquence of compoſition, to recommend the one or the other. Chriſtian perfection is the higheſt human nature is at preſent capable of. It confers on man the trueſt grandeur,

deur, the moſt ſubſtantial wiſdom, and the ſincereſt happineſs. It may not, indeed, form the man into the ſpruce, the gay, the gaudy, the dreſſy, the dancing, the delicate, the ſmooth, the ſubtle and ſervile ſycophant; but it will give a ſimplicity and ſincerity to his words and actions, a dignity to his ſentiments, a complacency and candour to his manners, that humility and condeſcenſion, that ſweetneſs and benevolence of ſpirit, which the man of mode affects, but affects in vain to imitate. The ſincereſt chriſtian, paradoxical as it may ſeem, would perhaps be the beſt courtier in the world: honeſt, without views of intereſt; faithful and aſſiduous without ambition; ſincere without rudeneſs or inſult; compliant without art, and benevolent without deſign; faithful to

his

his Prince, as to his GOD, and from the ſame principle of duty and conſcience;—the patron of virtue; a promoter of arts; a friend to his country, and to human kind;—not affecting the ſemblance, but practiſing the ſubſtance of virtue;—at home and abroad, reſpected and treated with honour, as always acting with honour, and good faith to others; prudent upon principle, without craft; engaging without artifice; and condeſcending without ſervility; dauntleſs from no conſcious guilt, and daring to the death, in the proſecution of truth and duty.

MORALITY hath its ground-work in nature, and hath therefore been properly ſtyled eternal and immutable. Revelation is a ſuperſtructure on the ground-work of nature, and conſpicuous

cuous for its ſuperior ſtrength, uſe, and beauty. The believer acts with more ſpirit and firmneſs, with more ſimplicity and ſincerity, than the natural man; as informed by a clearer light, and influenced by more powerful motives and ſtronger convictions. If revelation hath enlarged the ſphere of duty, it adminiſters proportionable ſtrengh and aid in the performance. It ſpeaks its divinity alike, by the virtues it exacts, and by the power it lends to their efficacy. Its graces are of a ſublimer order, than any natural, artificial, or even moral qualities of the mere man. They are effects of the more immediate operation of GOD; they communicate with, they take firmer hold upon the ſoul, and diffuſe themſelves with more power and uniformity on the manners, and external

external behaviour of the man. The believer thinks, and acts, with an eye to that preſence which nothing can deceive;—to a judgment which no art, or ſecrecy, or ſubterfuge, can evade or elude; and to an allotment of puniſhments, or rewards, which nothing can exceed or equal. A conſciouſneſs of his own unworthineſs, makes the believer modeſt and humble.

THE ſenſe of a particular Providence, of the ever preſent GOD, with the proſpect of a future and immortal ſtate;—a conviction that infinite rectitude, that ſupreme love, orders and directs the whole univerſe of being; and that this infinite and all-gracious GOD, is your GOD, and your portion for ever, give the believer an acquieſcence, a ſerenity, and complacency

placency of ſpirit, a benevolence in manner and expreſſion, which no faſhionable compliments, or artificial good breeding, can ever arrive at. A ſincere believer will be believed; and is ſure to gain the eſteem, the truſt, the confidence and love of all with whom he is connected. A believer as ſuch cannot deceive you; or, ſhould he be himſelf deceived, his miſtake muſt have the happieſt effect upon himſelf, and upon thoſe he converſes with; as it obliges him to whatever things are honeſt, are lovely, are of good report;—to forbearance, to forgiveneſs, to candour, to charity, and every act of beneficence toward the whole human race. The believer is what he ſeems; means what he ſays, and performs what he promiſes, or more. Acting, as he does, with a

ſtrict

ſtrict regard to truth and ſincerity, he is not at liberty to practiſe any artificial policy, and diſſimulation, in his commerce with mankind. Eaſy and happy in himſelf, from the principles of his faith, and the reflections of a good conſcience, he wears the ſmile of peace upon his brow, and diffuſes, from the fulneſs of his heart, eaſe and happineſs to all around him. His ſublime views, his ſpiritual, his heavenly, his immortal hopes and expectations, raiſe him above the world, and exempt him from all the ſelfiſh, the ſordid, and vexatious paſſions, which diſquiet and diſgrace life; give him a ſuperior air, manner, and dignity, tempered with a humanity and complacency, which is not to be acquired at any court in Europe;—and our fine gentleman, accompliſhed and ſet out

out with all the graces of France and Italy, when oppoſed to one who has been educated in the ſchool of Chriſt, makes no better a figure than a monkey does when compared to a man. It is the morality of the Goſpel alone, which can raiſe man to that perfection which Lord Cheſterfield would recommend to his ſon: and a character formed upon the moral principles of the Goſpel (one of the ſtrongeſt proofs of its divinity) as much excells the mere man of faſhion, as the ſubſtance exceeds the ſhadow, as truth ſurpaſſes falſehood, or a real and ſignal benefit conferred, does an inſidious promiſe, or profeſſion of beneficence.

HAD Lord Cheſterfield read the Goſpel with the ſame attention, with which he read Mr. *de Voltaire*, the Cardinal

Cardinal *de Retz*, and Tacitus, he had not perhaps found the ſame brilliancy of language and pride of wit, which he admired in his favourite authors; but he had found heavenly graces dictated in all the ſimplicity of truth, operating by a divine energy, powerful to correct every obliquity, to eradicate every corruption, and to confirm and advance every kindler and beneficent propenſity in his nature: and his Lordſhip might have been, at the ſame time, the beſt chriſtian, the moſt upright ſtateſman, and the fineſt gentleman in the nation. We have only to lament, that a Nobleman of ſuch eminent abilities, ſhould have been led by vanity, by nature, and the faſhion of the world, to adopt and recommend principles ſubverſive of public and private virtue, and of the

ſtrength, the ſecurity, the glory and happineſs of his country.

If revelation would have this happy effect upon the morals and conduct of mankind, would it be leſs propitious to their intereſts and fortunes as men and citizens?

Let Britons ſay, if the happineſs and glory of their conſtitution at home has been eſtabliſhed, or their empire abroad extended, by policy without probity, by the artifice of ſharpers, by the wantonneſs of wit, by the narrow views of ſelfiſh and mercenary ſpirits;—by men devoid of principles, morals, and religion;—by fribbles, by dancers, and debauchees;—by well-bred courtiers, and flattering ſycophants;

cophants;—by expert dealers in ſmall talk, and the chit-chat of the day?

LET Britons ſay, if the Graces alone have formed their councils, fought their battles, gained their victories, or advanced their conqueſts? Whether the ſtrapping of the ſhoe, or the curling of the hair, have had any weight in the balance of Europe; or in any age or country, ſupplied the place of true wiſdom, or martial virtue, in contributing to the growth and ſtability of empire?

WAR may ravage our country; plague, or famine, or peſtilence, may thin our ſtreets, and unpeople our villages, and in the end prove ſalutary, by purifying the moral world of its corruption, and forming us to a firmer

and ſounder habit of virtue and piety. But more fatal than war, than famine and peſtilence, are principles of immorality and impiety, admired and adopted by the national taſte, and admitted into the national practice.—They prepare a people for exciſion rather than caſtigation; they unqualify them for the diſcharge of duty in peace or war; they diſſolve all the bonds of ſociety, and propagate a ſpirit of meanneſs and ſelfiſhneſs, of luxury and lewdneſs, of diſſimulation and treachery, of injuſtice and oppreſſion, and give free range to every ſenſual indulgence that may be faſhionable in the ſight of men, and not incur the cenſure of the laws.

Lord Cheſterfield ſtands chargeable, in the eye of every competent judge

judge of propriety, with this ſpirit and theſe principles; and as ſuch deſerves our deteſtation, as one of the worſt enemies to his country that Britain ever produced, a Mandeville not excepted: and were I at liberty to wiſh ill to my country, I could not wiſh it worſe, than that its intereſts and affairs, at home and abroad, might be conducted by counſellors and heroes, by ſenators and ſtateſmen, formed on the plan and principles of Lord Cheſterfield.

But, this notwithſtanding, theſe Letters have met with an uncommon degree of attention and applauſe from the world, have been, and are ſtill read with much avidity and delight. Yet let me divert for a moment the candid reader's eye from the

page of Lord Cheſterfield, while I aſk him theſe few queſtions.

Do you find your heart bettered by the peruſal? Are your morals improved? Are your paſſions reſtrained or conquered? Are the vices of nature corrected? Are the ſorrows and troubles of life aſſuaged or ſoftened; or the terrors of death ſmoothed and ſmiling with peace and comfort? Does the noble Lord give you ſo much as a philoſophical grandeur of ſentiment, by opening to your proſpect the immenſity of the preſent ſyſtem, or the indefinite progreſſion of the future? — Does his Lordſhip's knowledge of human nature ſhew you wherein its meanneſs, and wherein its greatneſs conſiſts; — how to correct and raiſe the one, or to cultivate, improve

improve and enlarge the other? Has the noble Lord explained or enforced the ſocial, the moral, or religious duties; inflamed your love to your neighbour, your country or your GOD? Does nature adorned by his pencil wear a fairer hue? Or does virtue in his Lordſhip's drawing aſſume a more lovely form?

INSPIRED by his Lordſhip's public ſpirit, are you willing to bleed, to ſuffer or die for liberty, for virtue, and your country? Or do your hearts burn within you, while the Britiſh Peer, fired by the genius of ancient Greece and Rome, pours in upon you the ſpirit of patriotiſm in a torrent of eloquence and enthuſiaſm?

Do you find yourſelves diſpoſed by his Lordſhip's precepts to pay more

reverence and regard to ſimplicity, ſincerity and truth? Or are your breaſts more open to the impulſe of friendſhip, to cordial benevolence, and an undiſſembled love of mankind? Amidſt the various ſpeculations raiſed from his knowledge of human nature, do you find any calculated to remove your ignorance, to ſupport your infirmities, to heal your ſickneſs, to direct the wavering mind, and to ſtill the throbbings of an aching heart? Do you feel your hearts more charmed, enflamed and elevated by the love of ſacred wiſdom diſplayed in the works of the noble writer? Do you obſerve his Lordſhip pointing out to you, amidſt the vanities of this life, any real and moral good, any ſubſtantial, ſublime and ſovereign happineſs? Or does our philoſophic ſage, from the

the experienced inanity of this *filly world*, direct your views to new and opening ſcenes, — to a variety of untried being, with a future manifeſtation of Godhead to diſplay his perfections, and vindicate his preſent Providence?

SAY, Britons, is a life of diſſimulation, of hypocriſy, of ceremony, of compliment, of flattery and ſervility; a life formed to the faſhion of this world, devoted to paſſion, to pleaſure, to ſelfiſhneſs and ſenſuality; — a life aſpiring after nothing higher than the careſſes of a miſtreſs, or the friendſhip and favours of a court; — ſay, is this the life worthy of a being born with diſtinguiſhed moral and intellectual powers, capable of pervading the works of GOD, of conceiving immortal

mortal hopes, and imitating the divine moral perfections?

AMIDST our improvements and growing diſcoveries in the natural, the moral and the intellectual ſyſtems; —amidſt the ſupernatural light of heaven, which hath diſperſed the darkneſs that obſcured the nations, are we to revert to the principles of Epicurus; are we to adopt chance or fortune for our GOD, and pleaſure and paſſion for our guides? Does the glory of man conſiſt in imitating the beaſts that periſh; in adopting their appetites, and wiſhing and expecting to die their death? Is this the whole ambition of nobility? — To ſhine the blazing meteors of a moment, and to conſign their names, their eſſence and future proſpects to corruption and forgetfulneſs?

getfulneſs? Are infamy in life, and the duſt of death the only prerogatives, which man, as a reaſonable being, was born to inherit? And what has the noble Lord propoſed higher or greater for the object of your attainment or aſpiration? What is the figure, and what the fortune he points out to his ſon, but the reward of ſervility and flattery, of venality and corruption? And if he affects to defy death, it is not from any rational hopes, conceived or expreſſed, which might enable him to ſupport or conquer it: but, like a vain bully, he affects the hero, in fighting an enemy whom he cannot eſcape; and like a malefactor dragged to the place of execution, he dies hard, becauſe paſt all hopes of a reprieve.

SAY,

SAY, Britons! Sons of reaſon, ſay, if amidſt the awful revolutions, and births of time, and the majeſtic proceſs of nature and providence; if, in the preſence, and under the adminiſtration of an infinite and all-holy GOD, amidſt the diſappointments, the vanity, and miſery of life, and under the certainty of diſſolution and of death; ſay, if thus ſituated, you can think yourſelves born merely for the ſong and dance—to indulge to paſſion and pleaſure, to know nothing, to do and ſuffer nothing, to hope and poſſeſs nothing, but the ſhort-lived good of the preſent moment? Say, is friendſhip and benevolence, is virtue, liberty, and your country, a mere name, or a nothing? Say, if your moral feelings, the natural operations of the ſoul, peace of conſcience,

and

and the terrors of conſcious guilt; if the ſentiments of ſages, of philoſophers and legiſlators,—the deductions of reaſon, and the inſtitutes of religion, are all nothing but a name? Say, if life and death, if time and eternity, if the apparatus of heaven and earth, if GOD, the judge of all, contain or imply nothing reſpecting you, but the momentary gratifications of your ſenſes and paſſions, your vanity and vice? Away with this folly and madneſs!—With theſe fond and childiſh conceptions and degenerate appetites; and let us, if not for GOD's ſake, yet for our own, awake to the wants of nature, to the calls of providence, and to the voice of reaſon and religion: let us act, at leaſt, the manly and philoſophic part; and for the inſipid, the gaudy, the ſuperficial, the flimſy, and

delicate

delicate creatures, which the Lord Cheſterfield would make us, let us exert the conduct, and diſplay the character of thoſe who are called to be the ſons of GOD and of glory.

WHAT is it then that charms you in the page of Lord Cheſterfield? Acknowledge and bluſh, whilſt you acknowledge it. It is his vanity ſtooping to, and correſponding with your vanity; his nobility condeſcending to be your caterer and pimp of pleaſure; his eaſy and pliant virtue aſſuming any ſtamp, which the faſhion of the world is pleaſed to impreſs upon it; flattering your paſſions, countenancing your follies, and indulgent to every corrupt propenſity of your nature. You are charmed with his Lordſhip's private anecdotes, ſeaſoned with

with wit, with ribaldry, and ſcandal, tending to ſhade* ſome of the brighteſt names and characters that ever adorned, and to detract from the guilt and horror of ſome of the worſt that ever diſgraced human nature. You are charmed with a patriotiſm unembarraſſed with integrity, conſcience, and

* Some circumſtances he mentions in the Duke of Marlborough's youth, were certainly not intended to derive new honour upon the character of that illuſtrious general and diſtinguiſhed ſtateſman. All that he has to ſay of Brutus is, that he was a thief in Macedonia; he ſays not much better of Mr. Addiſon, whom we find him affectedly ſhy in mentioning, or recommending, amongſt the Engliſh Claſſicks; and all that he has to tell us of this moſt ingenious, moſt elegant, moſt entertaining, and inſtructive writer is, that he ſtole his book of travels, or moſt of the remarks and claſſical references in that book, from Alberti, an old Italian author; and this the Noble Lord gives us upon mere report or hearſay. Vol. III. P. 351.

love

love of country; and with a perfection devoid of morality and inward ſanctity.

BRITONS, that are parents, aſk your own hearts, ſuppoſing that Lord Cheſterfield's ſcheme of education was both poſſible and practicable, and that you could reconcile the ardor of youth with the ſagacity and cool diſſimulation of old age:—that you could unite in the ſame perſon, the two different characters of an Adonis and an Ulyſſes, of a Paris and a Neſtor, the wiſdom and political ſcience of a Walſingham, or a Burleigh, and the ambition and lewdneſs of a Somerſet, and a Buckingham:—Britons, who are parents, aſk your own hearts, whether you would wiſh your children to be educated on the Lord Cheſterfield's plan?

Whether

Whether you would delight to ſee them accompliſhed after his Lordſhip's idea of perfection? Making a figure and fortune in life at the expence of their innocence, their integrity, their ſincerity, their liberty and independence? Would it pleaſe you to ſee them exchange the virtues for the graces? A good conſcience for a plauſible appearance? Engliſh honeſty for French grimace? And ſound morals for external and ſuperficial accompliſhments? Could you ſincerely congratulate yourſelves, as having gained the grand point, when you beheld your ſons, as mere courtiers, faithleſs politicians, prudent and polite debauchees, playing a ſhort-lived part on the ſtage of this ſilly world, then quitting it with an hardy indiffe-

rence what ſhould become of them for ever?

YE parents and ſons of Britain, ſpurn the inſidious tempter from your embrace: he offers an inſult to your underſtanding, and the common ſenſe of mankind. He builds your happineſs on the ruins of your virtue: he recommends a courſe of conduct and manners, which diſdains all connection with ſimplicity and truth — with the ſincere love of GOD and man: he confines all your intereſt to this *ſilly world*, and employs your chief care in the cultivation of a frail and periſhing body. The faculties of an aſpiring and intellectual ſoul, with its proper objects, GOD and his works, his providence, perfections, and laws, he extinguiſhes or abſorbs, in directing the whole man to the gratification of

of the luſts of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life. Men, and the Noble Lord among the reſt, are only more reſpectable animals, born to breathe, to live, to propagate, and rot; with wit only to diſplay more vanity; and with reaſon to practiſe more fraud and falſehood than their brother-brutes; but, in other reſpects, the ſame commoners of nature; living the ſame life, and dying the ſame death.

It is true, his Lordſhip does not affirm this in direct and expreſs terms, nor argue logically and ſyſtematically on the principles of religion and morality: but the moral lectures to his ſon muſt be conſidered as ſo many practical concluſions, derived from the principles of infidelity, taken for grant-

ed: and though the Noble Lord hath allowed, that the believer hath the advantage over the infidel in point of argument, yet he adviſes, he moralizes, he concludes, as if divine truth and religious faith had no foundation or exiſtence in reaſon, or the nature of things: and the moſt licentious of the infidel tribe have ſcarce gone further, or ſhewn more malice to mankind, than the Lord Cheſterfield in his attempts to diſcredit moral virtue, and to cancel all moral obligation.

THE genius of Britain is naturally ſtrong and maſculine, great and enterpriſing, ſerious and thoughtful, diſpoſed to philoſophy, to virtue, to openneſs, to integrity, to wiſdom, to liberty and religion. None but an enemy to his country, or one ignorant

rant of its real intereſts, would wiſh to unbrace, and poliſh away this hardy and manly ſpirit, and to forego theſe native propenſities and valuable privileges of our reaſonable nature, for ſlavery, for ſycophancy, and infidelity, for diſſimulation and artifice, for vice, for falſehood and folly, for a compliment, a cringe, and a dance.

Upon the whole, what do theſe letters preſent us with, but the picture of a parent without true natural affection; of a man devoted to animal paſſions; of a wit without decency; of a moraliſt without virtue; of a ſenator without reverence to the laws; of a patrician without love to his country; of a ſtateſman without integrity and public affection; of a practical infidel and epicurean; plauſible

rather than reſpectable; ſpecious rather than virtuous; gracious than beneficent; complaiſant not benevolent; eaſy not happy; gay and joyous, not ſerene or philoſophical; vain and oſtentatious, not great or elevated; a licentious wit, a wanton buffoon, not the dignified and ſober ſtateſman; ſtudied in the frailties and imperfections, but unacquainted with the enlarged capacities and ſublimer endowments of human nature;—a ſlave to ſenſe and paſſion, but dead to the truth and comforts of the intellectual and ſpiritual world; alive to every vanity of life, but ignorant or inſenſible of the preſent GOD, and all immortal hope; eagerly graſping at feathers, at ribbons, at ſtrings, at pebbles and ſhadows, but careleſs of the moſt important,

tant, of moral, of divine, of eſſential and eternal realities.

If, after all, it be ſaid in defence of Lord Cheſterfield, that he wrote not for the public, and that as if aſhamed of his principles or precepts he employed or enjoined, that they ſhould be preſerved in inviolable ſecrecy, and that if he dealt in poiſon, it is only for his own and his ſon's uſe; this we acknowledge had been a ſufficient excuſe and the ſtrongeſt argument for the non-publication of this collection; but now that they are ſent into the world, and have all the influence and authority which the name, the character and example of Lord Cheſterfield can give them, no apology need be made for any attempt to counterwork their miſchievous effects

and operations, and to awaken the world out of that deluſive and immoral lethargy into which they are thrown by theſe faſcinating Letters.

If it ſhould ſtill be objected that we have uſed the noble Lord with too little ceremony, and have not paid him the reſpect due to his title and quality, we reply that truth, virtue and religion, the intereſts, the liberties and happineſs of mankind are great and momentous realities; in aſſerting which had we uſed a cautious reſerve, ſervility, or flattery, we had avowed our fear of man, we had betrayed the cauſe we profeſs to defend, and had given encouragement to vice, by complimenting the vicious. A ſycophant to the impious and immoral, whatever name or title they may bear, is a traitor to his

his King, his Country, and his GOD. The virtues are what alone command our reſpect, our homage and veneration. Lord Cheſterfield, ſuch as he appears in theſe Letters, has no claim to this veneration and reſpect.

NEVER, perhaps, did there leſs real merit or ſincere virtue appear, in any writer, than in his Lordſhip's genuine ſentiments and advice to his ſon. The ſages, the legiſlators, the philoſophers, the patriots of the ancient pagan world were ſaints and heroes when compared with our Britiſh moraliſt and patrician; whoſe principles can be conſidered in no other light, than as infamous to his name, baneful to his country, and degrading alike to his character as a man, a citizen, and a Briton.

WOULD

WOULD any man be great indeed: let him ſacrifice his mean and ſordid paſſions, his vanity, and even his wit, to the ambition of being and doing the moſt extenſive good to mankind. Let him be exalted above others more by his virtues, than by his ſtation. Let him do honour to his fortune, his genius, and abilities, by the generous application of them to the relief of the needy, and the inſtruction of the ignorant. Let his excellency appear by the ſolidity rather than by the luſtre of his accompliſhments. If the great have not faculties of body or mind ſuperior to thoſe of other men, let them be content to rank with other men. Let them eſtimate themſelves, as GOD and angels eſtimate them; of an order, degree, and eminence which bear a juſt proportion to their moral qualities,

their

their integrity, their temperance, their condeſcenſion, their humanity, and beneficence to mankind. Let piety and devotion make part of the character, and inflame the conduct of the great; and we will ſay, ye are gods; ye are children of the Moſt High. We will pay them all honour leſs than divine: we will hail them as miniſtring angels and delegates commiſſioned by heaven, to erect, to reſtore the kingdom of GOD upon earth!

THE END.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

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